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The Editors
MID-EAST INITIATIVE

ONE DOLLAR

JUNE 20, 1980

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REVIEWS OF
Graham Greene
Mircea Eliade
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Dorothea Lange
Luminism
Greek culture
Old New Wave
Media moodism

It was a Sunday morning in Boston and I was coming down the steps of the French church on Isabella Street when I saw this man holding up a tabloid newspaper and crying out, "*Catholic Worker*—a penny a copy." That was a price I could afford to pay. . . . It was the issue of December, 1935. . . . I was working on a throwaway weekly in Brookline and was fresh out of Harvard, where I had been converted to Catholicism, a fact which years later moved Arthur Schlesinger's wife Marian to exclaim, "How positively bizarre!"

MY LIFE AT THE CATHOLIC WORKER

JOHN C. CORT

LET THE RUSSIANS DO IT

J. PATRICK DOBEL

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Correspondence

Jews & Christians

Great Neck, N.Y.

To the Editors: This is to congratulate you and to thank you for the editorial "Darkness Visible," in the April 25th issue. It is the most lucid, the most thoughtful, and the most courageous piece I have ever read on the subject of the Jewish-Christian relationship. It is also most felicitously written. We need more of this caliber of thinking.

ZOÉ LANTELME BELTH

The Real Presence

Wausau, Wisc.

To the Editors: David K. O'Rourke's plea for a liturgy that symbolizes the transcendent is well taken [Apr. 25]. In the old liturgy, the Real Presence in the Eucharist was the dramatic focus of the Mass, and the Latin symbolic ceremony created an atmosphere of mystery and awe that in itself symbolized the presence of God. But in the new liturgy the burden of creating a sense of God's presence has fallen on the priest. The priest who "does Mass real nice" is often the one who manages to convey a feeling of God's presence through his body language, tonal inflections, and ad lib additions that reflect his personal relationship with God. He makes God's presence felt because he shares with us his own feeling of God's presence. Moreover, because the total emphasis on communal participation does not allow for the private, inner dialogue with God and self that nourishes our personal relationship with God, we have become more dependent on this sharing as a substitute for our own personal relationship. This places an unfair burden on priests who are as subject to emotional "burn-out" and the temporary loss of the immediate sense of God's presence as others in the caring-teaching professions. And like the rest of us, not all priests are capable of publicly conveying their feelings in the unself-conscious manner that would make them effective.

To restore the sense of God's presence and still retain the feeling of community that many say they find most often in "lots of singing," I would like to suggest these changes.

Restrict choirs and musical ensembles to the role of supportive song leader. Have the congregation sing all standard responses. The music for responses and hymns should be melodic and singable. Words, rhythm, tempo, and tonal quality should reflect the emotion appropriate to the response—penitence, joy, reverence, etc. Stronger emphasis in the Penitence Rite on reconciliation with our neighbor. Restrict the homily to five to seven minutes (lengthy homilies focus emphasis on the priest and away from the eucharistic celebration). Teach readers and priests the art of reading aloud and reciting with meaningful emphasis.

Rewrite the Liturgy of the Eucharist, keeping in mind the difference between dramatic repetition and redundancy and utilizing the rhythmic, lyric, and dramatic possibilities of the vernacular (and cultural body language) to restore the transubstantiation to its former position as the dramatic focal point. The emphasis here should be on private rather than on communal participation, except for communal recitation of the concluding acclamation and singing of the grand Amen; and emphasis on kneeling rather than standing. This contrast in itself would help dramatize an atmosphere of quiet reverence—the hush before God's presence.

The communal Our Father should be used as the post-communion prayer, signifying the transcendence of God's prayer over the man-made prayers that preceded; and followed by a joyous hymn, the final blessing, and ending with the sign of peace. This ending would signify that peace must be within us individually before it can be shared, emphasize the role of communion in giving us that peace, and provide a symbolic encouragement for the worship community to carry this peace into the world and by their embodiment of this peace emphasize Christ's presence in the world. It would also remove what is inevitably a social event from the pre-communion period which is more naturally a solemn, private, penitential preparation for communion. (It is inevitably social because in our culture the smiling exchange is an integral part of our handshake ritual, and the unsmiling handshake indicates lack of trust and hostility.) The effect of its present location has been to make communion an anti-climax rather than the climax. Receiving communion in a group at the foot of the altar rather than in single-file would enhance the reverence and dignity of the rite.

Changing the liturgy so that it more clearly reaffirms the Real Presence as the core of Catholic faith, the source of peace, and the nourishment of our personal relationship with God while strengthening the feeling of community and the presence of Christ in the community and in the world through the community would combine the best of the old with the best of the new.

MARILYN KRAMER

Musing right along

Oak Park, Ill.

To the Editors: Blessed be David K. O'Rourke and all his works ["Eggheads, Pumpkin Heads, & Liturgical Popularism," Apr. 25]. "The single priest's ability to put on a good show" will be the death of us all who go to church these days. "Peddling kitsch" indeed! That's what's happening. I hear a young man do his version of Sidney Poitier's *Lilies in the Fields* "Amen, amen . . ." almost every time I witness his presiding over liturgy—at the end of the canon, you know, at what we used to call "the Great Amen." That was a nice enough movie; but if God wanted that

(Continued on page 382)

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CHANCES IN THE MID EAST

THE DEADLINE for Egypt and Israel to reach agreement on the terms for an interim five-year period of autonomy for the Palestinians living on the West Bank has come and gone, without success. Egypt has been seeking a self-governing authority which would have real legislative and executive powers as well as voting rights for all Palestinians. Israel has been willing to grant only limited administrative powers. The United States says it favors "full autonomy." Israel fears that means an inevitable move toward Palestinian statehood which Israelis of almost all political persuasions abhor.

Meanwhile the Begin government has been making things even more complicated by its policy of planting settlements in occupied Arab territory, even in the heart of the Arab city of Hebron. It seeks to impose itself and its citizens on another and alien culture, on a people with widely different traditions and history. And this despite its avowed support for UN Resolution 242 which calls on Israel to withdraw from occupied territory. The results have been predictable: on one day a young Palestinian was killed by Israeli troops while reportedly trying to assault the Israeli military governor with a knife; on the next day Palestinian terrorists in Hebron carried out an ambush in which six Israelis were killed. The Israelis then expelled three West Bank leaders from the area, despite no proven connection with the attack, and Palestinian resentment ran still higher, even before the bomb outrages against the two Palestinian mayors.

All this is a clear reflection of the policy of Menachem Begin and his government. Despite criticism at home and abroad, Begin clearly intends to continue the policy of planting Israeli settlements now, with the probable goal of annexation later. Mr. Begin was faced with a choice of a less-than-perfect peace or holding onto the occupied territory, and he has clearly opted for keeping the land. The almost inevitable result has been to focus attention on Israeli intransigence while diverting attention from the continued hard line followed by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Hard line or not, a solution must be found for the Palestinian problem. Our failure to face up to this fact is alienating the whole of Islam from the West in general and from the United States in particular. Indeed, it has made it almost impossible for moderates in the Moslem world to say a kind word about the U.S. Somehow the deadlock in the negotiations must be broken; somehow the Palestinians must be offered such a degree of autonomy on the West Bank and Gaza that they will abandon the rejectionist Arab governments and join the negotiations with Israel. This will not be easy, but it must be done, and this means that ultimately the United States will have to bring the P.L.O. into the negotiating process. To continue the present policy is simply to encourage intransigence inside Israel and inside the P.L.O. Yet the American government has shown itself incapable of bringing the

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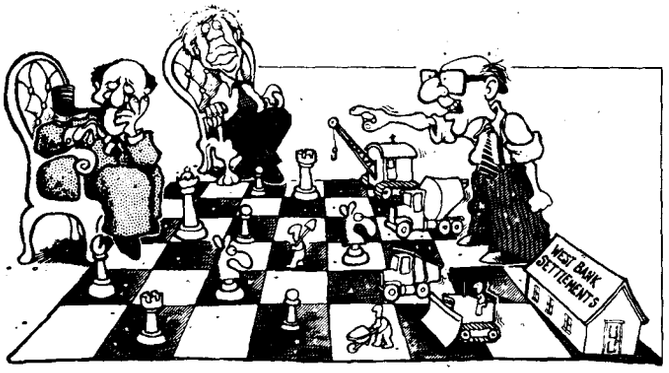

pressure to bear on Israel that is needed, especially in an election year, and this fact has put the ball in Europe's court.

A major effort is under way in the United Nations to line up support for a Palestinian state on Israel's border. If a resolution to this effect emerges in the Security Council, the United States will almost certainly veto it. The issue will then be brought by Arab and third-world nations to the General Assembly where it would be approved overwhelmingly. This has happened before, but this time there would be a difference: the Common Market European nations may very well join in approving the resolution. This would leave the United States and Israel isolated on the question of Palestinian rights, separated even from our allies, much as the Soviet Union was on Afghanistan.

The American State Department takes a very dim view of European efforts on the Palestinian question, seeing them as a ploy to ensure against an oil embargo and a move that undercuts our Camp David efforts, and State may succeed in heading off a UN resolution or in persuading our allies to abstain if the issue does come up in the United Nations. But the situation in the Middle East is rapidly approaching a crisis stage, and a European initiative has much to commend it, if not in the UN then outside it. The right of the Palestinians to self-government must be recognized, matched by guarantees of military security for Israel. This means that the present log-jam must be broken, and for this new initiatives are required. No such initiative can be expected from the Carter administration in an election year, and Prime Minister Begin seems determined to toughen rather than weaken his bargaining stance. The resignation of Ezer Weizman, the Israeli Cabinet's leading and lonely moderate, and Mr. Begin's initial effort to designate as his successor an opponent of the peace treaty with Egypt and a strong supporter of West Bank settlements is a bad sign. It may be that nothing can be done until two elections have taken place, one in the United States and one in Israel. But if there is any hope at all of improvement at the moment, it probably rests on the moves being made by the West Europeans.

THE LANGUAGE ISSUE

The "*non*" of nearly 60 percent of the voters of Quebec to a secessionist proposal is good news for Canada and for her neighbors. Elation is not called for, however. As Prime Minister Trudeau reminded his countrymen, "We have all lost a little in this referendum. If you take account of the broken friendships, the strained family relationships, the hurt pride, there is no one among us who has not suffered some wound which we must try to heal in the days and weeks to come." Canada's wounds are the consequence of a language division bequeathed to it by history. They prompt reflections on some coincidental developments in the United States.

Recently a Federal Court in Trenton, New Jersey, upheld a state requirement that all bilingual education teachers be demonstrably bilingual. Those not directly involved with bilingual education may not see the need to affirm this apparent tautology. For many teachers and parents of students in our urban school system, the need is only too clear.

The original argument for bilingual education was really unanswerable. Children who speak Spanish face difficulties in school that are entirely irrelevant to the content of first-grade math and reading or to their ability to master them. Because they cannot understand the teacher or the texts, their mastery is postponed, perhaps forever. So it makes sense to introduce math and reading and the rest of the curriculums in their own language, and at the same time to teach them English, so that they can join their third-grade classmates in a common language.

A second argument had to do with the child's sense of self-worth and pride in the language and culture of the home. The use of Spanish (or Italian or Chinese) in a school legitimates it to the child. It demonstrates that the language of the family is no less a medium of learning than the dominant language.

Obviously both arguments make sense in terms of the individual child's educational needs, but the second argument looks to the cultural morale and strength of the Spanish-speaking population as well. The problem is that this concern for acknowledging and reinforcing Hispanic culture generally has sometimes overtaken the original educational goals. Eased entry into the dominant language has seemed less important than the maintenance of the mother tongue and its separate culture. With such a shift in emphasis, one might well pay less attention to whether the Hispanic teachers really speak English all that well. If they do not as is too often the case, then they teach the Hispanic children in Spanish, sometimes right up to the sixth grade. And soon the school becomes a linguistically divided nation—a little Canada or Belgium—with linguistically distinct classrooms instead of provinces.

In this setting, many children wind up semi-literate in both languages. Teachers and students become cynical and politicized. Some Anglo teachers in New York, for example, have called bilingual education a fraud. Hispanic teachers respond, predictably, that this shows their bigotry. When asked by a *New York Times* reporter whether bilingual education works, a principal answers with a shrug: "It's the law."

No one wants to repeat the traumas of Canada and Belgium in the U.S. Whatever political and territorial concessions, or renewed sense of solidarity and purpose, the Quebecois or Flemish have gained in their linguistic struggles, these victories have not overcome economic disadvantage. Furthermore, the situation of American Hispanics is different—they are concentrated not in one but in many distinct areas of the

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NEXT ISSUE: Richard B. DuBoff on the new conservative economics. Ernest W. Ranly on the pope's eucharistic spirituality. Dennis O'Brien on Sartre.

country. On the one hand, this reduces the likelihood that maintaining Hispanic culture and endorsing the use of Spanish for certain public purposes would spur any destructive separatism. On the other hand, it also reduces the likelihood of any genuine success in the economic and political life of the nation without real facility in English.

There are many things that can be done to strengthen the linguistic and cultural heritage of Hispanic Americans, and bilingual education that is truly *bi*lingual can at once meet the needs of the Hispanic community and the individual child. But the guiding principle should remain that the best interests of all Americans, whatever their native languages, are served by the early mastery of the one language that dominates our culture. Any educational policy that postpones this mastery makes children the stalking horses of a mistaken cause and asks for the heartache so eloquently defined by Mr. Trudeau.

Report from Britain

BUSING—ANOTHER KIND

THE POWER OF THE BISHOPS

SCHOOL BUSING has recently become an issue in Britain. But it is not quite the same sort of issue as it has been in America. Since the Catholic lobby on education was instrumental in defeating the government on the question, it seems worthwhile to reflect briefly on the implications of what has happened.

The provision of free transport to school for children living more than three miles away from the school of their choice, was an important part of the deal worked out in the famous 1944 Education Act which set up the framework of our present-day school system. Free transport was particularly important for children in the country districts, who naturally tended to have farther to travel to school than their urban counterparts. But it was of special importance to parents who wanted a church school for their children (most of whom were Catholic). Catholic schools are more scattered than those in the state system, and distances tend to be longer for the children.

As long as the local education authorities had the money to pay for free buses to take children to and from school, there was no great difficulty about the system that was worked out. But as soon as Mrs. Thatcher demanded massive public-spending cuts, trouble began. Education had to take its share of the cuts: and Mr. Carlisle (the Secretary of State for Education) had to decide where the cuts were to fall. He decided to make the biggest savings by cutting spending on school meals and school transport. The local education authorities were no longer to be compelled to provide subsidized meals and transport: and this reversal of former policy would have given many authorities a chance to save the necessary money without cutting more essential educational expenditure, on teachers' salaries, equipment, etc.

But the government had not reckoned with the House of Lords in all this: and it so happened that their Lordships were especially sensitive to all matters concerning the countryside (where many of them live). But I doubt if the Lords would have worked up the enthusiasm to defeat the government on this issue if it had not been for the pressure put upon them by the church (and especially the Catholic) educational authorities. The reason why the Catholic authorities were so incensed is simple. Because of falling school enrollments in recent years, the church authorities were persuaded to agree to the closure of many small schools, especially in the rural communities. So the children had to go to larger schools, often at some distance from where they lived. Such agreement to close uneconomic schools was of course conditional, implicitly if not explicitly, on the understanding that subsidized transport would continue to be provided. For without that, there would be, in effect, an infringement of the rights of parents to choose a church school, if they wished, for their children. And of course it was an awkward fact that the Thatcher government makes a great point of emphasizing the rights of parents in the matter of choosing schools for their children. (This after all is one of the fundamental arguments the conservatives put forward for protecting the private sector in education—though it should be emphasized that the church schools are not, for the most part, "private" in the American sense—they are financed very largely out of state funds.) So the government was faced by the ironic possibility of being defeated on the very principle which it was itself trying to emphasize in another part of the educational forest, or jungle.

Of course, the government's case is simple. Cuts have to be made, in education as in other fields. If the cuts can't be made in the relatively marginal areas of meals and transport, then they will have to be made in places where it hurts more. Not surprisingly, in the House of Lords debate, this point—or perhaps threat would be a better word for it—was made very vehemently by the government speakers. But they knew they could not hope to succeed once the issue of principle had been raised, since the issue was the very one they themselves needed to defend. This is perhaps the main reason why it looks as if the government will not attempt to reinstate its policy in the House of Commons when the bill comes back to them.

One of the interesting sidelights on the whole question, however, is the fact that the Catholic authorities have succeeded in putting some very strong pressure on the government. The Duke of Norfolk, who is both the senior peer of the realm and a Catholic (and of course a strong Tory) was asked by the bishops to rouse his colleagues. In an uncharacteristic burst of political energy, he delivered the votes of many of his fellow country landowners (who see themselves, often quite rightly, as spokesmen for the rural interest) into the "No" lobby. Of course, the assistance in this matter of the former

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education minister, and now Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, Lord Butler, was an additional factor in the equation. For Lord Butler was the man who had worked out the 1944 Education Act, and clearly felt that what was being proposed was a betrayal of much that he had worked to establish in the postwar years. So in the event, the Lords defeated the government by a very large majority, in such a way that it was virtually impossible for the government to do anything about it—except, of course, make the cuts elsewhere. What exactly that means we shall have to wait and see. The probability is that the local education authorities will now make the cuts in such relatively vulnerable areas as adult education, or even education for the handicapped. These are areas over which, as I understand it, some threatening noises have already been made in the wake of the Lords' defeat.

One of the things that emerges from this otherwise not very significant incident is the power of the bishops, once roused, to put the screws on the government. Admittedly, they had the great advantage in this case, of being able to base their protest on a principle which the government itself is publicly committed to. Nevertheless, one wonders whether there might not be other issues on which, if they wished, the bishops could exercise more influence on government policy than they do at present. Of course in a case over which they are at variance with the rest of so-called "progressive" opinion (e.g., abortion) recent history shows that there is not much they can do. On the other hand, where this is not so, one wonders how far they might be able to go had they the mind to do so. The question of renewing the Polaris system, or of stationing American missiles in the rural tracts of East Anglia, might be cases in point. It is surely a pity that their Lordships have not concertedly thought to defend their country interests in that matter with the same enthusiasm that they have given to the school transport issue. Since the "most important duke" (to quote Belloc) is that of Norfolk, it would seem an appropriate thing for him to spend some energy on. But then, alas, he is basically a military man.

BRIAN WICKER

(Brian Wicker is Commonweal*'s correspondent in Great Britain.)*

Of several minds: *Frank Getlein*

SPOILERS AND SPOILSMEN

THE MAYOR OF THE PALACE ENTHRONED

YOU HAVE to admire them for the sheer, brazen effrontery of it all: the national chairmen of the two major parties and their assorted spokesmen and representatives and the way they all ease back into their comfortable television studio chairs (whatever happened to those stools? They certainly kept people more alert.) and allow as how John B. Anderson hasn't a ghost of a chance to win the election, will probably have no effect on it, "except," as they invariably phrase it, "in the spoiler's role."

What is a spoiler and what is a spoiler's role are fascinating philosophical questions we'll get to in a minute. For the purposes of this brief television review, however, it suffices to say that most Americans now believe the 1980 election is hopelessly spoiled before it even begins, that the spoiling consists in having their presidential choice effectively limited to Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, and that this limitation was accomplished in the primaries by the way the Democratic and Republican parties ran things and are still running them, in short that the real spoilers this year are the comfortable men sitting in those comfortable chairs and calling John Anderson a spoiler. *Quel chutzpah!*

Somewhat to my surprise "spoiler" in the sense the comfies are using it does not appear in the Webster's New Collegiate or the OED, the two I live on, nor even in the 1859 Funk and Wagnalls Standard, which I keep around for laughs. The closest approach is in the Random House Unabridged, where the word as "sports slang" means a team that wins a victory over a team ranked higher, presumably so ranked by journalists or some other equivalent of National Chairmen of major parties. In that sense, John Anderson may well turn out to be a spoiler, but he will be so only because the ranking is being made by people whose disinterest is kept well under control.

Except for that third, slang, not to say argot, listing in Random House, the whole drift of the dictionaries is toward spoil as in spoils-of-war, the loot, rather than toward spoil as in squeezing a lemon into a glass of milk or leaving the beef out in the hot sun just a shade too long. In such a sense, a spoiler would be more or less synonymous with despoiler and from such identification, however loose, two extremely interesting implications arise.

The first underlines the point that the major parties are, in fact, the spoilers of this year's elections, having spoiled it for all of us by inexorably bringing to presumptive nomination the two candidates supported by minorities of minorities in the idiosyncratic, crazy-quilt primary "system," as it is mysteriously called, and offering no one at all a person of some basic common sense can get even mildly enthusiastic about.

But the parties are the spoilers because they are also the despoilers. The reason I hoped enough to haul down the 1895 F & W was that 1895 was so much closer to the glory days of the Spoils System. Well, the Spoils System as it used to operate is gone forever, but those comfies chatting it up about "the role of the spoiler," are, of course, the embodiment of the latest reincarnation of the Spoils System—and there have been a few. Whereas in the old days the Spoils Sys-

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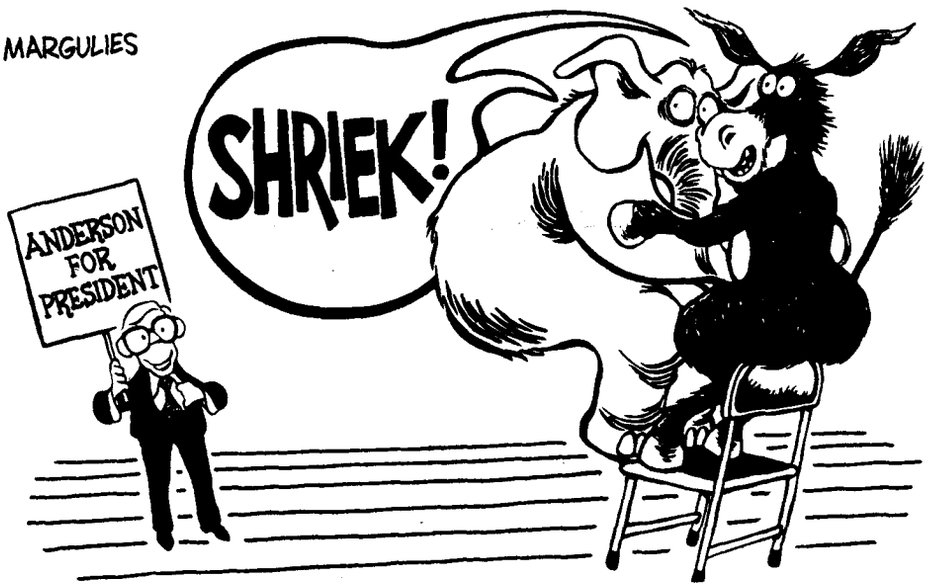
tem meant jobs for all the winner's foot-soldier supporters and hefty government contracts, with plenty of margin, for hefty party contributors, nowadays the Spoils System has simply delivered to the two major parties the privilege of deciding, all by themselves, who shall be the next president, or, to be finicky, who shall be the two choices, one of whom will be the next president. The Spoils System did this by the astonishingly titled Election Reform Act, which hands out taxpayers' money by the bushel basket to the two major parties and does its damnedest to insure that no one not a card-carrying, dues-paying member of one of those two parties shall get anywhere near the presidency or, indeed, public office on any level that the two parties can protect.

Since neither Democratic nor Republican party is mentioned in the Constitution, since, moreover, the Founders were all but unanimous in their fear and detestation of "party and faction," hoping, naively, to be sure, that such party or faction could be permanently avoided, what we have here is a Mayor of the Palace situation, but one that, unlike most of its precedents, has now been established by law and it is high time a disestablishmentarian movement got going. With the Democratic and Republican parties as established parts of the Constitutional system, we have given away, handed over, an important and not entirely yet all added up, part of *res publica*, the public thing, to strictly, even passionately, private interests. The Democratic and Republican parties, for the first time in their histories and for the first time in the history of the Republic, have been officially empowered to act as in some sense agents of the popular will. Of course, the parties, and their predecessors, have always acted as agents of the public will; so have Margaret Sanger, Ralph Nader, Gloria Steinem and Martin Luther King, but none of those private persons was established, none of them drew or disposed of government money. The parties, with their virtually anonymous comfies at the helm, do draw and dispose of such public monies. Since these party committees, chairmen, functionaries, are not chosen for their



jobs by popular election nor, as far as we know, by God, nor in any other way related to the Republic, we have delivered public business into private hands. We have, for the first time in our history, a Mayor of the Palace and it's a them and them are anonymous.

As far as I know, Eugene McCarthy was the first American of any prominence to recognize this profound change in the way we conduct our public business. He fought it, even fought a whole presidential campaign chiefly to get the issue before the courts, including the court of public opinion, was a lot more successful at the courts of law than in those of that opinion. If John Anderson does get elected, it will be in large part because of the groundwork done for him by McCarthy. (I guess, speaking of disinterest and all that, I should say here that in 1976 I was McCarthy's announced choice for Secretary of Defense, a choice based, as far as I know, on our mutual interest in returning the Armed Services to more colorful uniforms and thus getting at least some return on the country's immense investment; zouaves and hussars loomed large in my National Security plans; on the other hand, I didn't quit my paying job on the prospects of futures in the arms biz.)

As it happens, Eugene McCarthy is a good point to return to spoilers and spoilsmen. In 1968 (when I have no interest to declare), he was himself denounced as a "spoiler" in the non-lexigraphical sense of Robert Strauss et al. This was because after McCarthy had knocked Lyndon Johnson out of the race, Robert Kennedy announced that he, at long last, was ready to knock Lyndon out and would McCarthy please get out of the way. McCarthy then, in the view of such political philosophers as Arthur Schlesinger Jr., became a "spoiler" because he persisted in the race he had entered even after Robert Kennedy announced that he was ready to take over.

It was an interesting point of view then and now it is germane to the whole question of "spoiling" in the non-lexigraphical sense the word is given by the comfies. McCarthy in '68 was a spoiler because the Democratic nomination was supposed to be divinely ordained for Robert Kennedy if he wanted it. Here we get exactly the inner meaning of "spoiler" as it used by the comfies. There is a divinity that shapes our ends and it shapes them, now, through the liturgical medium of the national chairmen of the two big parties. Anyone else trying to horn in is not only un-patriotic and un-American, but positively anti-God. This is why the chairmen and their spokespeople speak in such horror of John Anderson. The man's an atheist. He doesn't believe in the God of Arthur Schlesinger and Robert Strauss and John the Con Mitchell.

Now, if separation of church and state means anything, it surely means that no candidate, even one favored by the Junior Schlesinger, is also favored by God and that such favor should mean

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nothing at all to the non-theistic voters, let alone to the non-theistic mechanisms for setting up tickets, ballots, voting days, whatever. The party chairmen are presenting themselves, finally, as the voice of God. We Jeffersonians, a dwindling band, maintain there is no such thing in a true Republic unless it be the voice of the people and the jiggled primaries sure ain't that.

We should vote for Anderson because he is the only candidate talking sense; we should also vote for him to save what can be saved from the Joint Mayors of the Palace before it's too late.

FRANK GETLEIN

Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

ABOUT FARMS

A LIFE OF SMELLS & FRAGRANCES

FROM MY HOTEL BALCONY in Rome I look out to the left and right on distant blocks of newly-built and graceless flats but straight ahead I have a vista of the Italian countryside. Meadow rings a monastery and its dependent school. The Angelus rings out three times a day and a white-robed monk paces a tree-lined lane to say his office. I can see a villa nearby with terraces and a formal garden. On the attached tenant farms the rectangular fields of vegetables are flourishing because of the late spring rains, and fruit trees are blooming. A flock of sheep grazes on the hill beyond. And on the horizon the dark cypresses march in double rows toward still another villa. Nearby, just beyond the hotel, there are one or two small independent farms.

In another year, perhaps, the growth and industrialization on the left and right will have closed, pincer-like, on this patch of countryside and wiped it out. But perhaps not. Common market economic planners are beginning to complain of an unforeseen phenomenon. The dispersal of light industry in postwar Europe has made it possible for many small and part-time farmers to cling to their small acreages. The owners have jobs now, and are part-time or one-crop farmers. So many are holding out against the encroachment of the large mechanized farms (really food factories) that some agronomists see them as an economic threat in a continent seeking to feed itself. In Italy, France, and Germany stubborn owners hold to the land.

Will the same thing happen in the United States where so many lament the disappearance of the family farm? Perhaps—around our great cities—and around the small ones which woo industry as zealously. But distance and the cost of fuel and transportation make the prospect an unlikely one for us. It is true that many a canning factory worker, many an assembler of electronic equipment gets into a car at the end of his or her work shift to make a lengthy trip to the old farm house. Perhaps he has a garden there, a few head of livestock, fruit trees, chickens. Perhaps the fields lie fallow or are leased to a neighbor who farms on a big scale.

In Europe such a farmer talks about clinging to the human dimension of things, of knowing and being known on home ground, of the continuity of generations in one place. In America he is more apt to speak of the appeal of freedom, space, light, air—the absence of crowds. But, in either case, he or she is not talking of the multi-faceted, almost self-sufficient farms of the kind I used to visit every summer of my childhood. Those farms are gone. That may not wholly be a bad thing. They were made possible by a great deal of back-breaking human drudgery and isolation. But the connectedness to the earth and the interconnectedness of creatures to which farm life bears witness are things the human spirit is loath to lose.

In these weeks of early summer I find the memories of the farm life I knew flooding back. The sound of a rooster crowing far off will bring them in a rush. They seem to be all creaturely memories—of sounds and smells and comforts. The sounds: there were the good man-made ones—the high whine of the separating machine which told us that the men were back from early morning milking and the milk was being separated from the heavy cream; the creak of the pump and the windmill followed by the sound of water splashing; the sound of the butter churn turning, and the thump and slap of the butter paddle shaping the butter before it was pressed into molds. There were the animal sounds of cows, of pigs, of horses, the peeping and pecking of the newly hatched and hatching chicks in the incubator, the frantic high-pitched piping of the last chick scurrying to reach the mother hen as she gathered her brood under her wings at dark, the clear notes of a meadow lark's call first thing in the morning.

In retrospect farm life seems more than any other a life of smells and fragrances. Some fragrances one takes for granted—clover and apple blossoms, new-cut hay and field grass—but there are smells, not fragrances, which linger—not unpleasantly at all—in the storehouses of memory like the sickly-sweet smell of pollinating corn and the pungent smell of manure spread as fertilizer.

Food is the business of farms and the production of food on the family farm is inextricably linked with the care of growing things and the warmth of working together so that others may join them around a table. Somewhere this summer I hope children gather eggs, know the "thunk" of plump gooseberries gathered into a pail, climb apple trees carefully to get the fruit just out of reach. Somewhere I hope they search for the errant turkey hen and her young, shoo them down from low tree roosts and herd them home just as the first stars show.

Somewhere they go into the lamplight where their folk of varied ages gather to read, sometimes to sing, to talk of former days and, as they do so, gather comfort and security against the night. Ultimately such children have learned the lesson of the family farm—that to which the small landholders cling everywhere.

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

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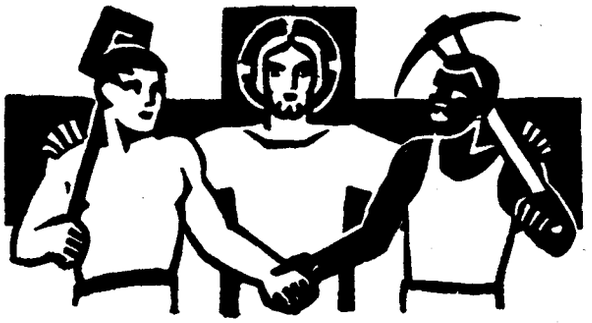

My life at the Catholic Worker

JOHN C. CORT

IT WAS a Sunday morning in Boston and I was coming down the steps of the French church on Isabella Street when I saw this man holding up a tabloid newspaper and crying out, "*Catholic Worker*—a penny a copy." That was a price I could afford to pay, even on my reporter's salary of $15 a week and trade ads. I bought a copy and took it home to Beacon Hill.

It was the issue of December, 1935, in the middle of the Great Depression, a phenomenon of which I was almost totally unaware. I was working on a throwaway weekly in Brookline and was fresh out of Harvard, where I had been converted to Catholicism, a fact which years later moved Arthur Schlesinger's wife Marian to exclaim, "How positively bizarre!"

The front page featured a free verse tract headed *Easy Essay* and written by one of the staff, a Peter Maurin:

A Bourgeois
is a fellow
who tries to be somebody
by trying to be
like everybody
which makes him a nobody . . .

A Leader
is a fellow
who refuses to be crazy
the way everybody else is crazy
and tries to be crazy
in his own crazy way.

A little weird but intriguing. On the last page was an appeal for funds to support the paper and a House of Hospitality at 144 Charles Street in New York City. It was written by Dorothy Day, one of the editors, and started with mention of a reader's question as to "why we don't use efficient methods." It responded as follows:

"We choose to spend the salaries we might be making if we were business-like on feeding and sharing our home with the homeless and hungry. . . We are willing to clothe ourselves in the donations of clothes that come in; we are willing to eat the plainest and most meager of meals and to endure cold rooms and lack of privacy . . . And we feel too that the work gains by it. There is ten dollars in the bank, the rent isn't paid, the printer is trusting us . . . We are quite frankly and unashamedly asking for bread."

Here was something to stir the mind and the imagination. Here was a group of people, obviously of some intelligence and sensitivity, down in New York City in the twentieth century, living a life of Christian poverty like any skinny, gaunt-eyed saint out of a stained glass window, and not reluctant to admit it either. I was further intrigued.

A few months later Dorothy Day gave a talk in Boston. I was late for the meeting and by the time I got there she was already speaking. Suddenly, bang, without ever to that moment having given it any serious thought at all, I decided to give up my $15 a week and join the Catholic Worker. What was it about her that so moved me? It was certainly not physical attraction, although she was by no means an unattractive woman. In fact, the face was rather striking, the cheekbones high and the eyes large and strangely slanted. She was tall and imposing in figure but roundshouldered and a bit stooped as though she were already feeling the weight of the burdens she had assumed. At that time she would have been about 39 years old, positively young as I look back now from the far side of 65 but to me then, a mere boy of 22, she was old.

She was not a forceful speaker in the usual sense of the word. She spoke in a low, conversational tone and the content was much like the articles I had read in the paper, highly personal and anecdotal, full of people, places and events, with occasional quotes from the Gospel or a favorite saint or writer.

What moved me was something else. I remember sitting in that dingy hall and saying to myself, "This woman is getting a lot of fun out of life and I would like to get some of that for myself, so maybe I'd better try the same kind of life." As much as anything it was a quality of humor and laughter, but

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with a deeper base than you might expect from a good comedian. It was a humor and laughter that seemed to reach down to the secret, hidden places of the soul, promising at any moment to explain the mysteries of life and human striving.

After the meeting I went up to her and said that I wanted to join the Catholic Worker and how did I go about it. She said, "Why don't you come down to the farm in July?", a response that left me vaguely dissatisfied because July was several months away and I was afraid I might change my mind.

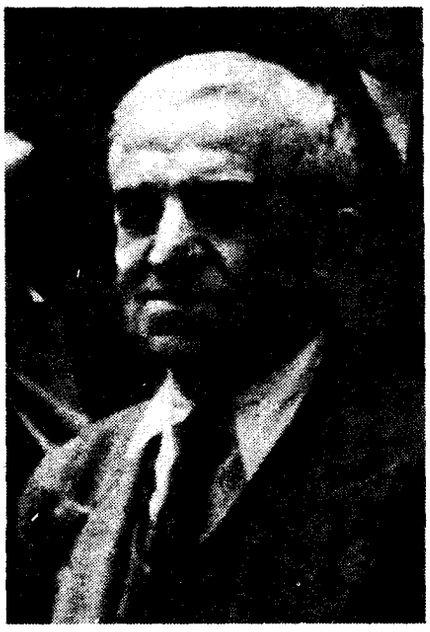
I THINK, looking back, that one of the things that attracted me to Dorothy was that her New York literary credentials were solid and I was perhaps unduly impressed both by New York and literary credentials. Born in Brooklyn in 1897, the daughter of a sportswriter, she took to journalism with leftwing papers, the old socialist *Call* and the original Communist *Masses*. She gravitated to Greenwich Village, sold a novel to Hollywood, and enjoyed the friendship of radical Bohemians like Mike Gold, Max Eastman (in his pre-*Reader's Digest* incarnation) John Dos Passos (ditto) and Eugene O'Neill. She was engaged to Gold briefly, but he broke it off because he thought she was too flighty to make a good wife and mother.

Converted to religious faith by happiness over the birth of her daughter Tamar, Dorothy became a Catholic and began writing for Catholic publications. She was sent by *Commonweal* to cover a hunger march on Washington by the Communist-led Unemployed Councils. Watching the marchers, she felt a powerful impulse to do something herself for the poor, and later entered a church to pray, "with tears and anguish, that some way would open up for me."

When she returned to New York she found waiting for her "a short, stocky man in his mid-fifties, as ragged and rugged as any of the marchers I had left." This was Peter Maurin, the French peasant and hobo philosopher who eventually persuaded her to start publishing the *Catholic Worker*. With $57 out of her own pocket she paid for the printing of 2500 copies just in time for distribution on May Day, 1933, at the Communists' parade and rally in Union Square.

It was an instant success. Within a few months the circulation was 25,000. By the end of the year it was 100,000 and by 1936, about the time I joined the staff, it was pushing 150,000. The state of the Catholic church in America, especially among the younger clergy and laity, was ripe for a publication that was willing to tackle head-on the scandal of mass unemployment and starvation in a country of immeasurable wealth, and willing to tackle it not simply in words, which are cheap at any time, but by deeds and example in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and providing a home for the homeless.

IN JULY, 1936, I reported to the C.W.'s new House of Hospitality, a 20-room tenement in the lower East Side neighborhood known as Little Italy. It was a slum with a slum's dangers, though in those days the dangers were for insiders, not outsiders like us. One night friends and I were eating in a restaurant on Mulberry Street when we heard shots and the screams of women. We ran out and found a man bleeding to death in the street, victim of a gang war. One of my friends was an assistant D.A. and his questions to those gathered around met with stony, unknowing silence. One child started to talk, and a man behind him clamped a hand over his mouth.



Peter Maurin

Our building, a pious but decidedly untidy donation to the movement, was infested with kitten-sized rats, lice, and bedbugs. As I lay in bed on my first night there, sweating in the midst of a July heatwave, smarting under the siege of small vermin never dreamed of in my middle-class upbringing, engulfed in the snores of Peter Maurin and half-a-dozen other men sleeping nearby, I seemed in my mind's eye to occupy a stage set worthy of O'Casey or Gorki.

Fortunately, my sense of the dramatic was not tested by another night at Mott Street during that particular heatwave. The next day a group of us bounced off in an old truck to the Catholic Worker farm in Easton, Pennsylvania.

The farm had a sensational view of the Delaware River winding through the wooded hills and checkered plain of New Jersey and, off to the left, parting the twin cities of Easton and Philipsburg. It did not have its own water supply, a detail missed by Dorothy in the enthusiasm of buying it. It had been the feast of St. Isidore, after all, so how could she have gone wrong? Most of the 28 acres was woods, hillside, and rocks.

I expected to spend my first day hard at work in the fields. But this was not the way of Peter Maurin's "Agronomic University" where he sought "to make scholars out of workers and workers out of scholars." Priority went to the former. Peter's Program was Round Table Discussion, Houses of Hospitality, and Farming Communes. The dining room table where we gathered after lunch was more oval than round and what went on there was more monologue than discussion, hour after hour of Easy Essays delivered in Peter's thick French accent.

Full as I was of my smart-ass Harvard distinctions, I was anxious to try an essay or two myself, or at least ask a few loaded questions. No chance. From long practice on the debating fields of Union Square and Columbus Circle Peter had learned never to breathe between sentences. If by chance he did stop to breathe, he held up a finger to indicate that there was more coming, and if by some act of reckless bravado someone were to ignore the finger and interrupt before he was

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ready to yield the floor, he made a face that, like Medusa, was calculated to turn the intruder to stone.

I joke now, but at the time I was sore as hell. As the hours and the voice singsonged on I sat there sweating in the summer heat, sphincter tight and teeth clenched in rebellion and resentment. It was generation gap, culture gap, idea gap—all kinds of gaps.

Later Peter and I became good friends. If you got him alone he was a gentle, lovable soul who would listen to you patiently and give you his last pair of pants. And he rarely had more than one. It was an article of faith that he should rarely have more than one. "The coat that hangs in the closet belongs to the poor," he used to say, quoting St. Basil.

Peter grew up in a medieval village in southern France and became a wandering loner, gravitating from school teacher in Paris to odd jobs in the U.S. and Canada, at one point driving a team of oxen twelve abreast while standing on a three-tongued plow in the wheat fields of Saskatchewan. Ordinarily it was hard to get Peter to talk about that period of his life, but he did reveal that for ten of those years he was out of the church. Dorothy once asked him why and he said only, "Because I was not living as a Catholic should." Something told her not to pursue the subject.

Then in the mid-twenties he had a profound religious experience that changed his life again. By this time he was giving French lessons in such places as the art colony in Woodstock, N.Y. He had even been photographed in a natty suit. He stopped charging for the lessons and gave them for nothing or for whatever people wanted to give him. He wore cast-off clothes and when one lady pupil gently complained about his appearance, he replied, "I don't want to arouse envy."

He began reading more intensively, so intensively that Wilfrid Parsons, the Jesuit editor of *America*, was later to describe him as the best-read man he ever met. He was particularly attracted to writers like Eric Gill, Nicholas Berdyaev, Peter Kropotkin, Arthur Penty, Hilaire Belloc, Jacques Maritain, Christopher Dawson—men who emphasized freedom, religion, the land, craftsmanship, and decentralized communities.

When the Great Depression struck it seemed to him a confirmation of all he believed about overorganized mankind, the evils of mass production, and the subordination of spiritual values to the demands of the machine and the lust for profit. One of his early Essays held:

> Industrialization is evil
> because it brings idleness
> both to the capitalist class
> and the working class.
>
> Creative labor
> is what keeps people
> out of mischief.
>
> Creative labor
> is craft labor.
>
> Mechanized labor
> is not creative labor.

In 1932 a redheaded Communist in Union Square told him to get in touch with Dorothy Day because "you think alike." George Shuster, the managing editor of *Commonweal*, told him the same thing and gave him her address.

They didn't really think alike. Dorothy had a socialist's commitment to the struggle of the workers and the trade union movement. As she recently told me, she was uncomfortable with one of Peter's favorite plays on words—"Strikes don't strike me"—and with the non-sequitur that usually followed: "When the organizers try to organize the unorganized, then the organizers don't organize themselves." Furthermore, she loved Dostoyevsky and Dickens and music, and Peter didn't. She did, however, share his love for the poor and his faith in the Christian Gospel and his search for a program that would embody both. She regarded him as an abstract thinker and may have seen in that a mental power she lacked.

Peter was abstract, all right. The late John Cogley, a C.W. who went on to become executive editor of *Commonweal* and later religion editor of the *N.Y. Times*, told a story about him: "One night in a cheap hotel a girl knocked on his door and asked, 'Want to have a good time, honey?' 'Come in, come in!' he cried, and when she did he inquired of her, 'Now, what would you say a good time *means* exactly? Let's discuss it'." Cogley does not record her reply, which might have been interesting, but apparently Peter was living as a Catholic should by that time.

MY FIRST 30 days on the Easton farm confirmed me in some of my opinions about agrarianism. Not that it was entirely unpleasant. At one point I slept in the abandoned pig pen, a tentlike structure with a tin roof and open ends whose floor was covered with fresh straw. When the sun came up in the morning across the valley it shone on the straw and turned it to gold. I had the distinct feeling that I was living in a palace.

There were workers on the farm and there were scholars, but not too many worker-scholars or scholar-workers. There were others harder to categorize. One was a former acrobat in the circus who may have landed on his head once too often. On nights when there was a full moon he could sometimes be seen doing cartwheels down the hill long after most people had retired. Another man played the flute and seemed quite normal except that every now and then he would say something strange. A lady visitor who was introduced to him asked if she might have met him before.

"Ah yes," he replied, "I recall you as a nude on a mantelpiece."

Another guest on the farm was a handsome, cleancut young man who we later learned was using it as a hideaway after pulling the heists that he needed from time to time to support his heroin habit. I finally took him up to Bellevue for treatment. He was shaking like a leaf in a windstorm and I absorbed an early lesson in the perils of addiction.

John Filliger, a seaman, was the man in charge of farming. He had grown up on a farm and was a good worker, but he had little help. About six acres were planted, mainly in alfalfa, corn, tomatoes, and potatoes. There was a horse, and later a cow, chickens and goats, but the farm never came close to

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being self-sufficient. Money had to be sent out regularly from Mott Street to buy food. The place was more accurately another House of Hospitality on the land.

Even though several months had elapsed since the purchase of the farm and it was the height of the growing season, there were not enough tools even to hoe the corn by hand, not to mention anything as sophisticated as a cultivator. I remember one warm afternoon crawling on my hands and knees down the long rows of alien corn, picking the weeds out with my fingers.

Fortunately, I had company. Bill Callahan, managing editor of the paper, was crawling down the other side. Bill, who died recently, had studied Thomas Aquinas and he was full of the Thomistic requirements for a just war. We spent the next few hours arguing about pacifism, which was a much more typical activity than farming on a C.W. farm.

THOUGH OFTEN characterized as anarchists, Peter and Dorothy preferred to call themselves "personalists," a term derived from the French Catholic writer Emmanuel Mounier, editor of *Esprit* and author of *The Personalist Manifesto*, which Peter wanted us to push as the answer to *The Communist Manifesto*. Peter translated Mounier's highly intellectual doctrines into simple injunctions: don't tell anybody to do anything or not do anything; do it yourself, or don't do it, and the power of your good example will gently but surely persuade others to go and do, or not do, likewise.

But in the real world of Mott Street you could throw good example at some people forever and watch it bounce off them like peanuts off a tank. And so a number of useful things did not get done, and some not-so-useful things did get done, because the people setting the good example were greatly outnumbered by the people setting bad example, or, more likely, just setting.

During much of my time at Mott Street I slept in a four-room apartment with nine other men, most of them guests from the Bowery. There was Tex, for example, a young seaman who joined us during the strike of 1936 and then decided, what the hell, why go back to sea when I can get free eats and a bed right here? Tex hardly ever spoke to anybody and never did any work that I can recall, but he could sleep like nobody I ever met before or since. He'd go to bed at eleven o'clock or so. Eleven or twelve the next day he would still be in bed, head buried under the covers, no sign of life. I figured he needed a psychiatrist. That and a little oxygen. As it turned out, Dorothy informed me years later, what Tex needed was an operation for carbuncles on his backside. When he got it he changed overnight into a productive citizen, a latter-day miracle.

The building had no bathtubs. If you wanted a bath you had to walk to the public baths some distance away and then face a pretty grim prospect. Some of us could count on C.W. fellow travelers who had apartments nearby and would let you use their bathtub once a week. It was amazing how quickly I adjusted from a life of daily showers to the realization that no great harm would befall if I bathed but once a week.

Most of the men I lived with had long since resigned themselves to the realization that no great harm would befall if they bathed but once a month, once a year, or once a lifetime. Few of them made their beds in the morning and fewer still ever bothered to take the broom which I left in a conspicuous spot and follow my good example by sweeping up around their beds, not to mention that wider horizon beyond their own beds which might even encompass so large and expansive an area as the entire room in which they slept.

In a word the place grew, with the passage of time, sloppy. In addition we had bedbugs, but bad. At one time or another we swept, washed, painted and sprayed the apartment, but we couldn't destroy the bugs, which seemed to have dug themselves into the building and pulled the covers up over their heads, like Tex. At night they emerged to torture those of us who were delicate enough never to have learned how to sleep through a bedbug attack. One metal cot they assigned to me was so infested that I took it up on the roof and went over it with a blowtorch. To this day the rich aroma of roasting bedbug still lingers with me, sharp and acrid in my mind's nose.

It figured that sooner or later, given my middle-class hangups, I would want to impose a minimum of order and cleanliness on my companions. As the one staff member on the floor I was understood to be in charge, whatever that meant beyond doing all the cleaning up myself. I therefore took it upon myself to post three typewritten rules as follows:

"1. Everybody out of bed by 9 a.m.

"2. Each man is expected to make his own bed.

"3. Each man is expected to take turns sweeping up."

It was a mistake. My roommate John Griffin, a Bowery type who had absorbed more of the C.W. philosophy than most of our guests, objected to the rules and appealed to Dorothy, who was generally recognized as the court of last resort. In fact, we called her the Abbess.

John thought the rules violated the principles of personalism and said so. Dorothy agreed with him and told me to take the rules down. At the time I don't think I even argued with her, so great was her authority among us. What it came down to was that the Catholic Worker was an extraordinary combination of anarchy and dictatorship.

A LOT OF hard work did get done, however, in the Mott Street house, where about 30 men and women were given shelter and food, and up to a thousand or more fed hot coffee every morning together with bread and apple butter, peanut butter or cottage cheese. The breadline wound down Mott Street and around the corner onto Canal Street, with men lining up frequently before dawn and, in the winter, shivering in the cold.

A lot of the men on the line were not too far removed from the pride and self-respect of men who work at a steady job. Many would certainly not have been there if it had not been for the Depression. Once you looked at them it was impossible to be indifferent to such things as over-production, underconsumption, the business cycle, supply and demand, as I had been a few years before when I grew so bored with Economics A at Harvard that I quit the course at midyear.

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Dorothy Day

In one of her books, *Loaves and Fishes*, Dorothy wrote that "John Cort thought that he was coming to us to study and work with the problem of labor unions and he found himself 'running a flophouse,' as he said."

I'm sure I complained, but she was wrong about why. I did not go down to Mott Street to work with labor, but, as noted, because Dorothy convinced me that I could get more fun out of life on Mott Street, New York, than on Pinckney Street, Boston. I could grant that Mott Street sometimes struck me as a flophouse, without the virtue of order that even a flophouse must demand from time to time. But there was something there that held you. There were some good laughs. And things rarely got so disorganized that you couldn't stand it. The hungry did get fed, and the naked clothed, and the homeless were given a bed, with or without bedbugs. It *was* more fun than Pinckney Street.

IT WAS Dorothy who sold me on the labor movement. Despite Peter's bias, Dorothy realized that to ignore the unions during the mid-thirties would have made as much sense as a radical movement ignoring the black revolution during the sixties and seventies. Labor was where the live action was. That was where John L. Lewis and the CIO, aided and abetted by Communists, socialists, and every young radical off the college campus, were busy organizing the unorganized and raising the flag of freedom from the tyranny of the boss. That summer of 1936 she was writing of her trip through the steel towns of Pennsylvania and of the "500,000 steel workers who have been unorganized, oppressed and enslaved for the last half century in the giant mills of the American Iron and Steel Institute."

She described a rally of steel workers on the picnic grounds at Braddock, Pa., and a speech given by Father Kazincy, a legendary figure whom even the Communist leader William Z. Foster recognized as a great man. "With his snow white hair," she wrote, "he stood broad and straight in the broiling sun, head held high, as he told the men, 'Do not let the Carnegie Steel Company crush you. For the sake of your wives and children, for the sake of your homes, you need the union. Remember that man does not live by bread alone. So do not let fear keep you from organizing. I am speaking to you as men, as creatures of body and soul. Remember your dignity as men."

My interest in labor was nourished by reports like that, but what really hooked me was the seamen's strike of 1936-37, the second of two during those years in which the C.W. was involved. In the first nearly 50 seamen had stayed at the Catholic Worker, but when the second broke out the Mott Street house was full up. In any case Mott Street was a long way from the waterfront and Dorothy was determined to help in an even more substantial way, so we rented a storefront on 10th Avenue just south of 21st Street, close to strike headquarters and just around the corner from the home of Joe Ryan, the leader of the longshoremen, who was doing his bit to break the strike in the interests of his friends the shipowners and the leaders of the ISU, the corrupt old seamen's union.

The whole west side of New York erupted in battles between seamen and what were known as "goon squads," thugs employed by the shipowners to break the strike.

For the next few months we operated a kind of commissary for the striking seamen, where we kept four large coffee pots going continuously from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. and spread on slices of bread every day about 50 pounds each of peanut butter, apple butter and cottage cheese. Close to a thousand men were fed daily. It was quite an operation, costing about $4,000 in 1936 money, perhaps $15,000 or more in 1980 money, which we begged from the readers.

At one point, when the rampaging of the goon squads was at its worst and one seaman had already been found dead on the docks, a warning came from strike headquarters that we should expect a raid on our waterfront commissary. About the same time a large paving stone was thrown through the big storefront window around 3 a.m. one morning. In the next issue Dorothy wrote defiantly, "We must now have a new window—half the stone is used to bolster up our stove and the other half is used to keep the breadknife sharp, as we are slicing up 150 loaves of bread a day."

Matters did not reach the full flower of tension until one of our own volunteers, Joe Hughes, disappeared. Joe was a seaman who had been staying at Mott Street and a likable guy whom I had worked with on the farm and laughed with a lot. All of us were deeply concerned, figuring that Joe might well be down at the bottom of the Hudson River with his head in a bag of cement.

Bill Callahan and Joe had been sleeping at the waterfront branch at the time he disappeared, but with Joe gone Dorothy sent me over to reinforce Bill. We had two cots set up in the back of the store, positioned so that we could see the front door. There was also a door in the back and one that led to the hallway of the tenement above us. As we checked the locks and got ready for bed that night we were more than a little nervous. Outside the wind was howling and a driving rain fell on Tenth Avenue. Those were the days when freight trains rode up and down the middle of the avenue and every now and then one of them would go clanking through the storm. It was a spooky scene, a great night for "slaughter on Tenth Avenue."

As we lay on our cots, waiting for the possible raid, Bill and I began to talk. I knew he was a pacifist from his articles in the paper and our argument on the farm, but I wasn't sure how far

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his faith in non-violence went. The talk went something like this:

"Bill, we can't just let them break up this place. We've got too much invested here. What do you suppose it's worth?"

"Well, there's the stove and the food and the pots and the furniture. Must be a few hundred dollars anyway, maybe a thousand."

"So what could we do to stop them?"

"We have a big monkey wrench and a small crowbar that we use to open the cases of coffee and the other stuff. We could use them."

"Okay," I said, "let's do that."

I was satisfied that Bill wasn't an absolute pacifist. We placed the wrench and the crowbar beside our cots and waited for what the night might bring. It must have been about midnight when a big black car drove up and parked right in front of our store. Four men got out.

"Bill, do you see that? They looked like gangsters."

"Yeah, I guess this is it."

We jumped out of bed and grabbed our weapons. The men walked past our front door and entered the door of the tenement house. We could hear their footsteps coming down the hallway alongside our store. We figured they would make their attack through either the side or back doors. Bill and I crouched there, one alongside each door, waiting like wound-up springs, clutching the wrench and the crowbar.

We seemed to hear footsteps going up the stairs of the tenement. The footsteps receded. Quiet dropped over the building and nothing could be heard but the wind and the rain. We stayed put, crouched and waiting for another five minutes, and then went back to bed. We figured the men lived in the tenement house. Anti-climax. The next day Joe Hughes showed up with nothing worse than a bad hangover. We had no trouble for the rest of the strike, which wound up a month later, an immediate defeat leading to an ultimate victory for the new CIO union.

Strangely, I don't remember if Dorothy had any comment on this incident at the time, or thought that Bill and I were wrong to yield to the lure of violence and give up the idea of throwing ourselves non-violently in front of the coffee pot and the peanut butter.

I LEFT the C.W. in 1938, having contracted a substantial case of tuberculosis. I don't regret the experience, or the price, and in any case I think I needed a substantial case of TB about that time. A few years ago I went back to the New York House of Hospitality, by then on East First Street, to visit Dorothy. Life at the C.W. was still full of drama. I witnessed the intervention of two young Workers' Pat Jordan and Mike Kirwan, in a fight between two guests, both quite drunk. One of them was bleeding badly from a head wound where the other had banged him up against the wall.

As Pat tried to restrain the more aggressive drunk, the latter pulled a knife and held it up, the point only a few inches from Pat's throat.

"Up against the wall," he said, but Pat didn't move.

I was in no hurry to intervene physically, but always a good man for questions I asked the knife man, "What's your problem?"

He was at a loss for an answer, or else and more likely, he saw something in Pat's eyes that gave him pause. In a few seconds it was over, he had put away his knife and had his arm around Pat's shoulder in a gesture of obvious affection. Non-violence had triumphed again. They walked down the street together, arm in arm, much as I had walked alcoholic guests away from the Mott Street house nearly forty years before.

A little later, when Dorothy and I returned from Mass, they had got the bleeder bandaged up and were feeding him supper, still there on the sidewalk, in front of an equally bandaged little gingko tree which he had broken in two in another drunken fit several weeks before.

Somebody had called for an ambulance and the police came along. There was a squad car at the curb. Dorothy was clearly fed up with him and you could see she was particularly annoyed at the possible loss of the gingko tree, which was virtually the only tree on the block.

Bellevue had already refused to take the man. I think the diagnosis was "insane, but not dangerous," or something equally reassuring.

One of the Workers said to her, "He didn't start the fight. The other guy started it."

You could see her hesitate, torn between her desire to get rid of him and some inner voice that said, "Give him the benefit of the doubt. If a man take your gingko tree, give him your weeping willow also." She let the police drive off without a word, leaving the Bleeder there on the sidewalk.

Still later, as I walked to the subway on Houston Street, past the bodies of three drunks who lay like corpses, casualties on the battlefield of life, I stopped at a traffic light and there was the Bleeder with his bandaged head, energetically wiping the windshield of a motorist waiting for the light, cadging money for another drink.

So it went. So it goes.

DURING THAT visit Dorothy and I argued a bit about pacifism and democracy, sitting in her little booklined bedroom-office on the third floor. I was doing a study of democratic process at the time and trying, with some difficulty, to figure out a relation between democracy and the C.W. Dorothy was well into her seventies by then, the figure more stooped, the face more lined, the hair whiter, but there was still the same contagious laugh, the same warmth, the same sense of indomitable will.

I mentioned the incident at the Mott Street house of my posting the three rules and her ordering me to take them down, and then added, "The strange part of it is that it was not until a few months ago that the question occurred to me, 'Why didn't I call the guys together, explain the situation, and see if I could get an agreement, or at least a majority vote?' That would have been the most personalist thing I could have done, not to mention democratic. It would have demonstrated that I had enough respect for them as persons to want to give them a

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chance to discuss the question, and if they agreed, give their personal assent to the decision. The thought also occurred to me that we never had a staff meeting, or a house meeting, during the years I spent at the C.W. Why not?"

This was her reply: "No, because Peter said you ran it like an abbey. If people don't like what the abbot decides, they leave. If the abbot is wrong, then he changes his policy. Voting and such just leads to the creation of factions and cliques."

So that's what it was: an abbey without any rules. No wonder we called her the Abbess. I had forgotten the rationale. But even an abbey has chapter meetings where the monks are given a chance to criticize, complain, and contribute something to the decision-making process. Even the pope has his college of cardinals, councils, and now the synod of bishops. I made these points. I made concessions for the fact that the C.W. had to deal with a good many people who were more sick than sane. No, Peter said you ran it like an abbey. Later I discovered she had written in her journal, back in my time, "I feel bitterly oppressed. I am in the position of a dictator trying to legislate himself out of existence. They all complain that there is no boss. Today I happened to read Dostoyevsky's *Grand Inquisitor*. Most apropos. Freedom—how men hate it and chafe under it, how unhappy they are with it!" But in the end she had to admit that the anarchist abbey was for her the only solution, and who am I to say that it was not the best?

Peter Maurin, who Dorothy believes was a saint, died in 1949, but she herself, weakened now by age and several heart attacks, remains the unquestioned leader of the oldest radical movement in the American Church, a movement that has shaped such other movers and shakers as the Berrigans, Cogley, Michael Harrington, America's premier socialist, James O'Gara, editor of *Commonweal*, and many others.

On November 8, 1979, she was 82 and still serving as editor, publisher and most readable contributor of what has become one of the largest and most durable journals of opinion in America. It continues to sell for a penny a copy and 25¢ for a year's subscription. The C.W. recently sold its farm on the Hudson River at Tivoli, the last in a growing line of failed Farming Communes, but is buying a smaller one across the river and has opened a large new House of Hospitality off the Bowery on Third Street. Over 30 similar houses continue to operate around the country, more or less loosely affiliated with the C.W.

Peter would have been sad to see the Tivoli farm go, but the opening of another house would have consoled him, for he would be quick to admit that even more basic than his call for Round-Table Discussions and Farming Communes was his insistence on the Works of Mercy and that passage in the 25th chapter of Matthew that reminds us, "Inasmuch as you did it unto these the least of my brethren, you did it unto me."

Having written that, I stopped to question it. Would Peter have been so quick to admit any such thing? Or put it this way, wouldn't he have agreed with the wise man who said, "Feeding the hungry is a simple imperative, but it is not a simple undertaking." Peter's formula for feeding the hungry on a more permanent basis than the breadlines and soup kitchens of Mott Street and East First Street was the Farming Commune. To some of us this also was too simple an undertaking. Michael Harrington, for one, concluded that the introduction of large quantities of democratic socialism into American life was necessary to feeding the hungry both here and abroad, and he left the Catholic Worker to become chairman of the Socialist Party. As time went by I came to agree more and more with Harrington, but that could never dim my sense of gratitude to Peter and Dorothy for introducing me to the harsh and dreadful things that tell you where true love is to be found.

In a recent issue of the paper Dorothy, with the sharp reporter's eye that has yielded little to age, described the scene on Third Street as she looked from the window of her room in Maryhouse:

"At exactly 8:05 a.m. the morning sun gilds the upper floors of the buildings across the street, creeping from the gray one to the red brick one. A lovely sight. Pigeons fly from the roofs. Looking up, I see squirrels on the roof edge. The ailanthus tree (maybe it's a sycamore) stirs in the cold, east wind, the sky is a cloudless blue—and now one side of the tree, reaching the third floor of those once-luxury tenements, is all gilded as the sun spreads rapidly around. Young people are on their way to work, but the children are not yet on their way to school. My tree is now radiant with sun!"

Indeed it is.

Jessica Powers

Cancer Patient

Fire and sword cavort in her aging body
and storm is having a lark in her wearied mind.
She is less, she is loss.
How could her own keep watch? She is entrusted
to other care.
The nurses find a grief in her wasting flesh,
but charts reveal a small surprise of comfort:
peace can invest calamities of pain.

Power is not said to peer above these ruins;
suffering with One who suffered hides its worth.
No one ascribes to her
an influence or faintest likelihood
of the apt plea or the transforming word,
and yet

I saw a river stopped by her lifted hand,
a tide turned back, a stubborn mountain moved.
I saw a history altered, wrenched to the light
by pain, pain.
After her war I visualize her spoils
in a new springtime gathered, meadows of grace
miraculously given
to her loved, her lost, to all who come to her feast
in this faithless time.

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THE KREMLIN AND THE TAR BABY EFFECT

Let the Russians do it

J. PATRICK DOBEL

OVER A YEAR AGO the exhumed Munich analogy and "appeasement" reentered current political rhetoric. Ronald Reagan has recently refined this to "appeasement, vacillation and aimlessness," and chafing politicians, political commentators and even reformed appeasers like Henry Kissinger have joined in this outburst of creative historical reconstruction. The crescendo has become more shrill under the combined influence of the presidential campaign and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Someday the Munich analogy will die a well-deserved death, but today it lives on, a perpetual indictment of low key, diplomacy-oriented foreign policy such as that of the Carter administration. Its users imply that only a more aggressive military posture reflects a "realistic" view of the geo-political realities of a manichean world. Conversely, individuals not addicted to air strikes, quick reaction forces, or blockades at the first whisper of Soviet involvement are condemned to be "soft-headed."

The terms of political discourse have changed so quickly that I would like to explore a seldom mentioned thesis which might serve as a corrective to the radical preference for a remilitarized posture. Basically, I want to suggest that the low key, diplomacy-oriented strategy coupled with appropriate covert tactics can be strongly defended on "hard-nosed" geo-political grounds even if we accept worst case assumptions about Soviet hegemonic intentions.

The worst case scenario for the third world can with certain variations be briefly summarized: The primordial Soviet desire for hegemony unfolds in the omnipresent attempt to use fifth columns and surrogates to dominate the third world. Once a sufficient number of clients control the pressure points on the arteries of trade, the Russians can interdict the flow of vital resources to the western world and deny increasingly important third world markets to the mature capitalist economies of the West. Since each new client will be a humiliation to the United States, this policy discredits American security guarantees and will induce the western allies to accommodate the Soviets without overt military threats.

If this hypothesis about Soviet intentions is correct, then the the West. Since each new client will be a humiliation to the Russians no longer seek to take advantage of trouble spots and exploit United States weakness; rather they now desire to do nothing less than direct the internal shape of foreign societies and be able to enforce an economic stoppage against the western world. They are wading into the economic and political quagmires which beset the cultivation of client states by the United States in the fifties and sixties. To direct internal development, ensure pliant allies and gain forward military bases will involve a significant and destabilizing Russian presence in the form of highly visible bases, military and economic presence and influence over decision-making far more obvious than a simple desire to abet policies which embarrass or harass the West. This type of commitment will bring the Russians in direct conflict with the forces of nationalism which it exploited so well over the last two decades. They will become vulnerable to a number of low key and covert tactics, sometimes drawn from the Soviet's own handbook, which can maximize the Soviet cost and minimize the gain. If the USSR is seriously seeking a worldwide network of client states, my suggestion is, "When in doubt, let the Russians do it."

The maxim assumes that a reasonable doubt can exist as to whether a Russian involvement necessarily endangers the United States. Verifiable increases in Soviet influence in a country should be assessed on three grounds. First, will the new level of influence plausibly hurt vital United States or allied security or economic interests? Second, will the Soviet influence make the indigenous populace substantially worse off? And third, does the pattern of Soviet influence radically change the tacitly accepted rules of international behavior and conflict limitation? In making these evaluations it should be remembered that the United States rhetoric that all America seeks is self-determination, economic progress, reasonable investment and trade climate and non-alignment is perfectly real. Given the proven reliability of the transnational corporations to adapt to various regimes and maintain the flow of resources under all conditions (witness their functioning during the Iranian revolution or the fact that the pro-Soviet regime in Angola protects western oil investments from pro-western UNITA forces) the actual level of internal influence needed by the United States is much lower than that imputed to the Soviet Union.

The costs to the Russians begin with their involvement in indigenous violence. "Nation building" is fraught with inces-

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sant levels of civil war and smoldering repression. Alignment with a modernizing regime will often require supporting one group against others and entail complicity in internal repression. Sometimes the group alignment might overlay ethnic divisions and complicate the violence as in Ethiopia where Russia supports the Dergue against the Eritreans and Somalis. The Russians must inject money, weapons, advisors and either their own troops or surrogates to maintain the friendly regime. As the United States has learned, these externally armed and trained regimes utilize excessive levels of airpower and disproportionate violence which does little to create enduring ties of loyalty to the central government. Russian-backed regimes in Angola, Afghanistan, and Ethiopia reflect prior American patterns: city garrisons, incessant airpower, napalm, gas, and periodic sweeps of the countryside. These tactics waste the land, decimate the population, create hordes of refugees and sow the seeds of enduring hatred of the Russians.

If the issues of domestic dissent do not commit the Soviets to massive military investments with their clients, then unending feuds with neighboring countries will involve the Soviets in both external military conflict and thankless efforts at mediating among clients. The Soviets must deal with the labyrinthine disputes between Syria and Iraq or the Palestine Liberation Organization and Libya. There is also the rather sad example where the Soviet "friend" Libya arms Eritrean guerrillas who fight the Soviet-armed Cubans and Ethiopians who in turn fight the Soviet-armed and trained Somali troops. Few third world countries escape such webs of intrigue and violence, and the Russians would be ensnared in Byzantine dilemmas which can pave the way for quick and petulant changes of allegiance on the part of the client states.

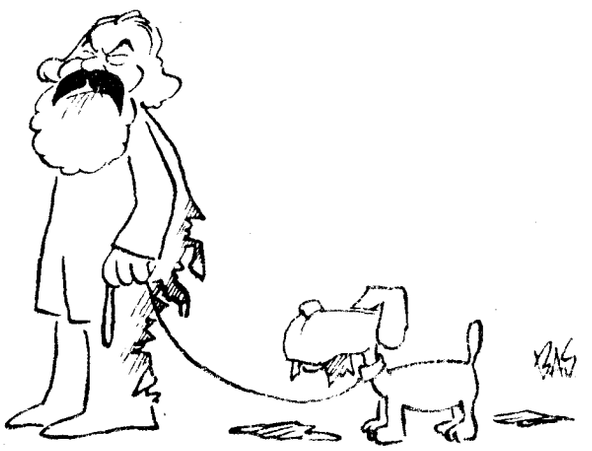
Besides the cost of violence, the client commitment requires large sums of money to build up the infrastructure of a country. Titanic sums of money—money which up until now the parsimonious Soviets have been extremely reluctant to spend—need to be transferred to the third world. The renascent Soviet interest has increased the Soviet share of development costs. The CIA estimates that the Soviet-bloc economic aid to third world countries rose from $800 million in 1977 to $5.2 billion in 1978. The money along with military expenditures must be diverted from the ailing Soviet agricultural and consumer economy and brings limited rewards.

Stuck by previous commitments, the relations between the Russians and their clients will resemble those of a tar baby. The patron will be unable to extricate itself from a floundering state and when it tries to reshape the situation, it simply gets sucked in deeper and harder, losing all independent leverage. The tar baby trap begins with the corruption which pervades developing societies and which settles in eddies around arms expenditures and large investments. The grandiose corruption of Sukarno in Indonesia and Nkrumah in Ghana should stand as object lessons to the Russians. New expenditures will open new horizons for entrepreneurs to siphon off vast sums. Rapproachment with local corruption saps the morale of advisors and engenders Russian cynicism and contempt towards the client people which leads to resentment in the population. In Angola, the Cubans are notorious for their extensive black market operations and unwillingness to fight, while looting and discipline breakdowns are common in Afghanistan.

The tar baby corruption goes far deeper than morale costs or local economic corruption. Once the exogenous country invests a client regime with time, prestige, money, military expenditure, and advisors, it becomes increasingly difficult to play a free hand. The ruling clique of the client state can play diplomatic judo and use its own weakness and need to throw the Soviets into harder commitments than originally envisioned. In both Angola and Ethiopia, more aid is being sought and aid has steadily increased due to the pressures of protracted and often unsuccessful conflict. The economic, military and human costs go up proportionately as they lose independent leverage and become hostage to the ambitions of their client. Additionally, as the Soviets lose leverage the regimes can ignore with some impunity Russian advice regarding domestic reform. Soviet troops are now dying regularly in Afghanistan in part because after an unsanctioned coup, Hafizullah Amin ignored moderate Russian suggestions and embarked on a disastrous policy which pulled the Soviets into the quagmire faster and deeper than they had planned.

Domestic reform can help overcome the tar baby problem, and the Soviets have generally been more successful in this area than the United States because they have aided successful revolutionary regimes which begin with a mandate for sweeping domestic change. Successful land reform and the extension of education and basic services to the entire population create bonds of enduring legitimacy. In Ethiopia the Dergue, in spite of its cruelty, possesses a fair degree of legitimacy among the peasants and soldiers because of its domestic reform. Even in Afghanistan, one of the main reasons for the virulence of the fundamentalist Moslem reaction stems from the heavy-handed imposition of social and land reform by the earlier Taraki regime. The Soviet-supported clients often earn a patina of legitimacy which makes repression tolerable and creates an enduring backbone of support.

The United States has been more vulnerable to the tar baby effect because of its alliances with oligarchies or technocratic military regimes which rely on private investment, high growth rates, and a trickle-down effect. Land reform and the provision of basic services are viewed as counter-productive to



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the Chicago-minded advisory cliques of these countries and not compatible with the perceived interests of the old elites. The United States failed consistently to nudge such regimes towards even minimal reforms. The failure of last-ditch efforts to mediate the Nicaraguan revolution revealed the fatal weaknesses of the tar baby trap and the lack of leverage which can cost a patron state in the end; it also reflects the enduring truth that client states, unless based upon commitment, reform, and provisions for basic need, become hollow shells of terror and greed.

GIVEN THE PROBLEMS of client states, a hard-nosed realist might well ask, "Why bother with them?" The answers for the Soviets have already been provided; the next question is "Can the Soviets gain the leverage they seek?" Over the long run, the self-interest of states and the forces of nationalism will frustrate them with careful help from United States policy.

The Soviets have generally been able to exploit local nationalism because of the colonial heritage and the revolutionary indictment of neo-colonial puppets which were willing to sell resources and national heritages to the West with minimum benefit for the population as a whole. Far-flung and highly visible United States military bases and western support for client regimes in their internal and external repression and wars aggravated nationalist hatred of the West. However, a lower profile for the United States in many countries, its advocacy of human rights and more sophisticated transnational corporate strategies which emphasize local control deprive the Russians of obvious targets.

The influence required by the purported Soviet strategy will either undermine the legitimacy of regimes which become closely aligned with them or bring the Russians into direct conflict with legitimate nationalist regimes. As a regime relies more on external support it will lose its incentives to undertake domestic reform and the hard task of political accommodation with domestic groups. Without such hard work an abiding legitimacy cannot exist and the more reliant on the Soviets, the greater the temptation to bypass politics in favor of repression. The Russians are now and will continue to be gamely engaged in building bases and abetting internal repression of domestic dissent all over the world. All clients tend toward stagnation and brittle repression and such pressures will wear off the patina of legitimacy. Soviet clients will generate multiple forms of regional, cultural, ethnic, economic, and nationalist opposition.

On the other hand, no astute third world leader can ignore the truckling of the East Europeans, the reduction of Cubans to Soviet janissaries and the direct invasion and game of musical governments in Afghanistan. They will try to avoid the Soviet net. A decade ago the Russians wore out their welcome in Egypt with their demands, and recently Nigeria invited most of its Soviet military advisors to leave while reopening trade negotiations with the West. Mozambique with an AK47 etched on its flag has refused Soviet demands for naval base rights and is seeking expanded western contacts. Zambia and other front-line states pushed a Zimbabwe compromise partially to remove Soviet guerrilla influence from their soil. The present costs of Soviet friendship, never a free ride, are now much higher.

The Russian problem with nationalism will be aggravated by the economic ills which will naturally befall any government. The Soviet clients do not possess a sterling record of economic successes. After the first land and social reforms, regimes often bog down in economic mires caused by internal inefficiencies, production bottlenecks, corruption, vacillating world markets, lack of adequate technologies and overreliance upon a Soviet-inspired industrialization model. Self-interested countries will turn to the West and transnationals on their own accord. The Congo Brazzaville, third on the list of Soviet aid to Africa, has opened negotiations for trade credits with the West, and the People's Republic of Mozambique is actively seeking to promote more trade with the West. If there is one lesson both third world countries and the transnational corporations have learned, it is that Marxists, Socialists, liberal democrats and probably the devil can all strike mutually profitable bargains with the transnationals. Countries can gain jobs, capital, and technology without ceding nearly the degree of overt political influence sought by the Soviets.

The Russians make the most inroads where regimes are forced to rely exclusively on them by western intransigence as in Cuba or where a government is faced with intense domestic problems such as Ethiopia. The Russian-backed Ethiopian government came to power largely because of the tar-baby problems the U.S. had with the Haile Selassie regime, and with the exception of domestic reform the Dergue is pursuing policies in Ogaden and Eritrea similar to those of the previous government. The Soviets can also intimidate or conquer lands contiguous to them. Close proximity to the Soviet Union requires an extremely sophisticated nationalist strategy to both be friends with the Soviets and maintain contacts with the West as Iraq has tried. Once the Soviets enter into a country such as Afghanistan, it is almost impossible to avoid complete domination by the Russians.

The thrust of my analysis has been that independent regimes seeking stability will seek to avoid undue Soviet domination and seek expanded diplomatic, trade, and educational contacts with the West, especially if the cost to them is lower than Soviet help. This self-correcting response will minimize Soviet gains in most countries. Countries which become obvious Soviet puppets will suffer a loss of nationalist legitimacy and be vulnerable to western countermeasures. Only in countries contiguous to the USSR will the Russians have the potential of substantial and stable gain.

The United States can encourage these self-correcting tendencies with its own low key policy. Most importantly it must prove that it can live with reform-minded nationalist regimes. United States willingness to work with Zimbabwe guerrillas and the halting efforts to seek rapproachment with Nicaragua fit this profile. A slow and careful disengagement from brittle or illegitimate oligarchical or military regimes follows as a corollary. The human rights ban on Somoza and the attempt to extricate America from the Shah are clear cases. If absolutely

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necessary some forms of direct intervention might take place but problems with the CIA aside, a strategy of unpublicized aid to indigenous groups is far superior to overt militarization of a state. The United States could take a leaf from the Soviet strategy of the last two decades and align with legitimate nationalist forces to support wars of national liberation against Soviet-dominated regimes. Aid to guerrillas in Yemen, Angola, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan could enormously increase the cost of Soviet intervention with minimal loss to the United States. By embarking on an activist policy, Russia is on the defensive inside each client state and poses a more overt threat to independent-minded nations than the United States.

Each intervention of Russia also poses opportunities for creative diplomacy to take advantage of cleavages and mistrust which it generates. Somalia's defection after Russian ascension in Ethiopia and the revulsion of the Islamic world after the Afghanistan invasion provide such opportunities. But aid to indigenous rebels or low-keyed diplomacy and economic aid are far more preferable than overt militarization of the area. The reluctance of Kenya or the Emirates to supply the United States with bases suggests the great costs to domestic legitimacy posed by foreign bases. High-level United States demands polarize countries and ruin the attempt to present the United States as an alternative compatible with reforms and nationalism.

I began this analysis with the acceptance of some controversial and harsh assessments of Soviet intentions, assessments which I do not believe are necessarily true. Even in light of these, learning from attempts to maintain a much lighter form of hegemony than that imputed to the Soviets, one can conclude with rigorous geo-political consistency: If the Soviets have embarked on a world girding strategy, let them try.

Media

THE MOOD IN SECTION C

THE PUBLIC HEART HAS ITS REASONS

FOR THREE DECADES now James Reston of the *New York Times* has referred to the most powerful capital city in the history of mankind with the Thornton Wilder-esque phrase "this town." "The mood in this town last week . . ," he will write, and then he will tell, actually, the "mood" in a tiny uppercrust of the world's most powerful people. Paul Duke of PBS's *Washington Week in Review*, and other Washington media people, also sometimes use the phrase "this town" in that slightly precious mock-modest way. Perhaps they do it more often in a presidential election year. In such a year their sense of distance from, and their professional curiosity about, the mood out there in those quaint, half-forgotten *other* towns, where the voters live, work, ignore politics, denounce Washington, bring their celebrated supermarket baskets to the celebrated check-out counters, and hold their perversely volatile opinions, of necessity increases.

Happily the mood in the other towns remains a little elusive. The media people ask questions at factory gates, front doors, caucuses and now even at polling places, while the feel of the lever is still hot in the voting hand. Nevertheless there come those Tuesdays of Surprise, those double reversals of public attitude. The public heart has its reasons that the media know not of. One is grateful even for the spectacularly idiosyncratic: The voter in 1948 who wanted Dewey because it would be pleasant to have a president with a moustache, the Baptist West Virginia voter William V. Shannon discovered in the 1960 primary who opposed John F. Kennedy on religious grounds (the Kennedys he knew were *Methodists*); the woman in Brooks Hays's story who said, "Oh, no, I never vote, it just encourages them"; the Oregon citizen who remarked angrily, when the candidate favoring daylight saving time said it would give "one more hour of daylight." "One more hour of daylight! My grass is brown already!"

During this year's media searchings of this tricky public, I was reminded of an instructive experience I had along that line in the *last* presidential year. I tell it now partly as an illustration of the point, and partly for nostalgia and reminder.

It was late September of 1976. A friend and I went to hear candidate Carter in the Roberts Memorial Stadium in Evansville, Indiana. We arrived early and discovered on the walls of that stadium large pictures of Evansville basketball teams of years gone by: big warriors in their undershirts looking somberly at the camera, standing uncomfortably in rows with basketballs by their sides.

We bought box lunches and took our places not with the main body of the crowd in the folding chairs on the floor but in the permanent seats above it—in Section C, which afforded a good view of the speaker's platform located on the free throw line at the Southeast basket. We had a good angle on the tops of the heads of the local and national Democrats who were shortly to appear before us, or rather beneath us. We ate fried chicken and sandwiches—if two slices of white bread with nothing between them but oleomargarine can be called a sandwich—while a small dance band played "Back Home Again in Indiana" and "Hello, Dolly."

There was a great rustling and whispering and pointing when the heroes of the National Press arrived, winding through the crowd behind a banner with a strange device: CARTER PRESS FOLLOW ME. Though there were to be visible at this gathering, before it was done, two United States Senators, a candidate for Congress, a candidate for governor, a mayor, a passel of other political figures, and a candidate who six weeks later was to be elected president of the United States, it was nevertheless quite clear that the visitor who gave the crowd a shock of recognition and of awe was Sam Donaldson of the ABC television network.

As the time for the meeting drew near the orchestra wafted up over the aroma of fried chicken and old tennis shoes the sweet saxophony sound of "Georgia on My Mind." Mr. Richard Reeves was later to complain about the number of

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times he had that tune inflicted upon him during his travels as a political correspondent in 1976, but Indiana must be distinguished on that point from other states. National commentary should pay attention to these subtle differences from province to province. "Georgia on My Mind" had not until that moment been played in my hearing, through many visits to Indiana by members of the Carter family. When a junior high school band or other musical aggregation had found it necessary to greet a visiting Georgian with a tune from its repertoire that had the word "Georgia" in the title, the choice had always been, so far as my knowledge extends and so far as I could recognize what they were playing, "Sweet Georgia Brown." Playing that song involved a certain confusion of Georgias, to be sure, but as the theme song of the Harlem Globetrotters, "Sweet Georgia Brown" is linked to the vital center of this state, basketball.

The audience in the upper seats in Evansville was sparse enough to allow easy conversation and close enough to enable one to hear one's neighbors. But the two men sitting directly behind us ate their fried chicken in silence through remarks of leading Democrats from the city, the state, and the nation. The then-Senator Vance Hartke, a former mayor of Evansville, cried out from the platform: "I want to say to you, Jimmy Carter: the people of Evansville *love* you." Neither Carter nor these two men from Evansville showed any response to this dubious confession of municipal affection. The two citizens munched silently through the ranging remarks of Senator Birch Bayh and continued non-committally chewing when he introduced candidate Carter himself.

Carter, arising to speak, explained that he was on his way back to Plains from a good meeting in Portland. He then sped through his issues in a rousing rapid fire talk, without, however, rousing Section C.

The goin' - home - to - see - my - wife - and - my - little - girl - on - our - FARM issue.

(No comment)

The grew - up - on - a - FARM - worked - hard - all - my - LIFE issue.

(Silence)

The federal - government - will - have - a - balanced - budget - by - the - end - of - my - term - as - president - YOU - CAN - DEPEND - ON - IT issue.

(No word from Row 14)

The bloated - mess - in - Washington - thirteen - different - agencies - deal - with - drug - abuse - the - government - and - the - American - people - must - start - workin' - TOGETHER - for - a - change issue.

(Section C maintains silence together)

The Gerry - Ford - is - a - true - leader - of - the - party - of - Harding - Hoover - and - Nixon issue. The unemployment - rolls - have - increased - under - Nixon - Ford issue. The slow - robbery - by - inflation issue.

(The only sound is the rustling of lunch bags)

The Washington - insiders - go - to - the - same - clubs. - play - at - same - golf - courses. - don't - go - into - the - HOMES - to - see - a - family - in - TROUBLE. - don't - know - what - a - FARMER - feels - like issue.

(Row 14 feels like being quiet)

The Vietnam - Watergate - CIA - spiritual - damage. - American - people - HURT. - American - people - GOOD. - want - nothing - for - ourselves. - American - people - LOVE - OUR - COUNTRY issue.

(American people in Section C love their country without a word)

The not - an - easy - campaign. - not - easy - for - a - complete - outsider - to - defeat - an - incumbent issue. The I - owe - the - special - interests - NOTHING. - I - owe - the - people - EVERYTHING issue.

(A standing ovation on the floor; a seated silence in Section C)

When the fervent political articulation under the backboard was over and the meeting adjourned, candidate Carter descended to floor level to shake hands with the citizens crowding around the free throw line.

Row fourteen finally had a comment.

"He's a short fella, ain't he?"

"Yeah. Small guy."

That was the sum total of political observation, so far as I heard it, in Evansville.

Astute political commentators like David Broder of the *Washington Post* and Hedrick Smith of the *New York Times*, who are taller than the president, failed to discern this sleeper among the issues on the public mind. The members of the Washington press corps, an insulated elite of above average height, do their center jumps only with each other, and lose contact with the heartland. That's why they must make those awkward three-day forays out into the provinces to try to discern the Mood of Peoria. Well, I'm telling you the mood of Evansville, at least in Section C, Rows 13 and 14. The sandwiches were no good and the candidate was short.

WILLIAM LEE MILLER 6' 1"

Screen

BOTTOM OF THE WAVE

FRENCH CINEMA DEVELOPS A PAUNCH

IT'S MISLEADING, I know; but I can't help thinking of certain film cultures as if they were human beings. I have the same trouble with political institutions. The Congress, for instance, just won't stay fixed in my mind as a constantly changing roster of hundreds of people with a capacity for every possible version of man's fate. House and Senate together keep collapsing into just one person, Senator Claghorn in an Yves St. Laurent suit, but with the cigar ashes still on his shirt front and grubby $100 bills overflowing from his pockets. The film cultures that reduce themselves to stereotypes like this are always foreign ones. Domestic films I see too many of, and get

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too much background information on them, to make such a mistake. But French filmmaking, represented by the few films that are available here, takes on a singular personality for me.

The history of French cinema almost encourages this misconception, this anthropomorphosis, because back in the early sixties the New Wave tried to represent itelf as being a single personality. It wasn't, of course, as the subsequent careers of even close collaborators like Truffaut and Godard have shown. But if the solidarity of those days makes me think of French filmmaking as an old friend now, it has become a friend with whom I find maintaining old loyalities increasingly difficult, no matter how badly I want to do so. I can't believe that someone could change so much in such a short time. In less than a decade French cinema has lost its wit, its intelligence, and its hair. It has turned from a gifted intellectual into a sentimental fool. It has given up art for light comedy and melodrama. It has developed an emotional paunch.

I know I've complained about this before, recently. Blier's *Coup de Tête*, which I wrote about in March, was bad enough. Be grateful that I spared you Claude Lelouch's *Robert et Robert*. Lelouch was someone to object to even back in 1966, when the New Wave was still in its prime, and he had just released *A Man and A Woman*. To release such schlock in those days took a certain gall that might almost, in retrospect, be mistaken for courage. Now, when there is so much French dreck around, it seems almost unkind to single out poor Lelouch, who had the foresight to go it alone, to pioneer in this kitsch at a time when it was, ironically, a kind of *avant garde*.

Even in 1966, however, *A Man and A Woman* did enjoy a certain commercial success in this country that might have given one pause. Nobody expected films as demanding as Godard's, or even Chabrol's, to reach a wide audience. When Godard's *Weekend* played in a prominent theater on the East Side of Manhattan, or when a succession of Chabrol and Truffaut films had similar bookings, it seemed astounding, and encouraging. But when Lelouch was handily able to reach the same Gucci-shoes audience, and then some, one's heart should have sunk. One should have steeled oneself against the onslaught of drivel that we have witnessed since then.

A director whose work demonstrates the sorry state into which French cinema has fallen—one that really does seem to condense it all into a single career—is Costa-Gavras. He was never exactly a member of the New Wave, for he arrived on the scene a little too late. But his first film in 1965, *The Sleeping Car Murders*, showed his sympathies with the new cinema in France. A *policier* with a surreal edge to it, the film followed through on some ideas Godard and Truffaut had pursued, yet had a distinct, rather politicized style all its own. It suggested that gains in movie art made by the New Wave might actually be consolidated by those who came after. In a subsequent series of features made in the late sixties and early seventies, Costa-Gavras seemed to put aside his interest in stylistic development, or at least subordinated it to other considerations. *Z* (1968), *The Confession* (1970) and *State of Siege* (1973), were all rather conventionally designed color films because, I suspect, Costa-Gavras wanted to reach the widest possible audience with them. Each film told a true story of political repression, and precisely because of their cinematic modesty, their readiness to sacrifice technique and journalism to political goals, each was a compelling film. *The Confession* was especially so.

Now the mood of political urgency in which those films were made has passed, and Costa-Gavras seems to be a director who is stranded with neither a style nor a story. That's what his latest film, *Clair de Femme*, suggests. It stars Romy Schneider and Yves Montand, who played the lead in all Costa-Gavras's political films of a decade ago. This time Montand plays a purely fictitious character from a Romain Gary novel. He is Michel Folain, a man who is going through some bizarre attraction-repulsion with an apartment in central Paris. When we first meet Michel, as he is about to board an airplane for South America, he suddenly turns around and grabs a cab back to Paris instead. There he cruises past the apartment with unquenchable yearning on his face, but doesn't stop. In the course of the film, he repeats this ritual at Orly airport three or four times, returning on each occasion without having left. After the first time, however, he meets Lydia Towarski (Romy Schneider), a woman he picks up on impulse outside a cafe. A romance quickly ensues and becomes what each subsequent return from Orly is all about.

Although they soon land in bed, the attempt at lovemaking isn't successful because each of them has a past he or she must first get over. Actually, it's not so much a past as an unmanageable present. She has a husband brain-damaged in an automobile wreck, and he has a wife dying of cancer in that apartment. By the time he reveals this to Lydia and us, the wife is in fact dead, having killed herself with his collaboration. That's what he was staying away for. But it's all right. Everything is all right for both him and Lydia, for now they have each other. It's ok for him to lose his wife as soon as he has someone else to turn to. *Clair de Femme* is a movie that thinks about love and death the way a lot of people, restless but terrified of loneliness, think about divorce—as an abyss that one should be able to leap across by going directly from a spouse to a full-time lover. It's a movie that panders to our need for instant gratifications, instant alternatives that will relieve us of life's suffering.

A sign of how Costa-Gavras's instincts in his movies have changed is to be seen in the extreme delicacy with which he treats his story. Lydia's deranged husband is living in the lap of luxury without a visible scar on him, and Michel's wife is never allowed to become more than a form under a sheet out of focus in the background. Costa-Gavras wants to spare us, along with his characters, the need to think too much about life's general unpleasantness. Compare this treatment to that given the character played by Yves Montand in *The Confession*, which is Costa-Gavras's best film. The true story of an Eastern European statesman who was purged by his own government, *The Confession* shows us in relentless detail the torture this man endured during his official "interrogation." Simply by playing the role, Montand lost thirty pounds.

I don't mean to suggest by this comparison that I would like

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to see more brutality and violence in current French movies, but only that what made *The Confession* remarkable was its ability to make brutality and violence stand for something human on the screen. The film made an art form out of its matter-of-fact treatment of its hero's physical and emotional deterioration because they gave us a way to share Costa-Gavras's great admiration for a great man. *Clair de Femme*, like most French movies I see today, is only trying to spare us such disconcerting experiences.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

Art

TRANSPARENT EYEBALL

RECAPTURING THE LUMINIST MOMENT

FOR A DESCRIPTION of the perfect luminist moment, we need look no further than Henry James's early short story, "A Landscape Painter." His artist-hero writes of a summer afternoon, "I shall never forget the wondrous stillness which brooded over earth. . . . The deep, translucent water reposed at the base of the warm sunlit cliff like a great basin of glass, which I half expected to hear shiver and crack as our keel ploughed through it. And how color and sound stood out in the transparent air!" It was not until the 1950s, however, in an essay by John Baur, that the term luminism was coined to describe a style of American painting that, long before the Impressionist movement began, made "quietly poetic use" of light.

In Baur's eyes the luminists were the logical successors to Thomas Cole and the Hudson River school of painters. He saw them as "extreme realists" in their technique and "lyrical poets" in their sensitivity to mood. In a 1954 article for *Perspectives USA*, he made his case for the uniqueness of luminism on the way in which the luminist artist used: *light* that was not atmospheric but radiant, part and parcel of every object in a picture; *brushwork* that left no sign of stroke but relied instead on "infinitely careful gradations of tone" to achieve its effects. A decade later, in her *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century* Barbara Novak, using Baur as a springboard, went on to define luminist classicism in more precise terms; but for Novak, as for Baur, luminism remained "an attitude not only to *light* but to *things* in nature"; luminist creativity rested with "a subjectivity so powerful that the artist's feeling is transferred directly to the object with no sense of the artist as intermediary."

In terms of American art history, recognition of luminism as a breakthrough has itself been a breakthrough. For it has allowed us to see how a number of once-overlooked artists—notably, Fitz Hugh Lane, Martin J. Heade, Sanford Gifford, and John F. Kensett—were able to go beyond the celestial opera of the Hudson River school painters and offer a view of America that reflected the direct and unmediated experience of nature Emerson had in mind when he described himself as a "transparent eyeball" through whom the currents of the Universal Being circulate. What we have not had up to this time, however, is a major national art show devoted to the luminist movement and cognizant of the equally important fact: the principles of luminist thinking pervade nineteenth-century American culture.

Fortunately, all that has now changed thanks to the exhibition only now closing at Washington's National Gallery and the publication by the National Gallery and Harper and Row of *American Light: The Luminist Movement, 1850-1875* ($40, 330 pp.). It is difficult to think of a recent show on American art more deserving of the crowds it has drawn or more serious about the indigenous quality of nineteenth-century American landscape painting.

What luminism represents vis-à-vis European painting becomes particularly clear when we look at the Newbury marsh series of one of the principal painters in *American Light*, Martin J. Heade and then turn, as John Baur and Barbara Novak have, for a comparative look at the haystack paintings Monet did in France during the 1890s. The comparison stems naturally from the shared subject matter (haystacks) plus the interest both artists had in light. But these factors also explain the Americanness of Heade's luminist vision. What draws us to Heade's *Sunset on the Newbury Marshes* of 1862 or *Sunrise on the Marshes* of 1863 is exactly the opposite of what gives life to a picture such as Monet's *Haystack at Sunset, Giverny*. With Heade it is not the transcience of the moment or light so complex that it can only be captured in multicolored brush strokes. We see instead a landscape in which stillness and simplicity reign. Heade's haystacks are not mere shapes, not primarily the product of light. They are clear, linear forms; and they sit in a field in which our eye moves from foreground to background so smoothly that we forget it is by artistic design—by lines of recession established through the discreet placement of the haystacks—that the overall harmony and lucidity of his world are maintained.

The paradigmatic quality of luminism within an American context becomes evident when we move on to the Brace's Rock series of Heade's elder contemporary and fellow New Englander, Fitz Hugh Lane. In contrast to the Hudson River painter, for whom wild and craggy mountains are so important, Lane, like Heade and other luminists, focuses his attention on still water. In his case water is truly "nature's eye." Looking at his *Brace's Rock, Brace's Cove*, we see a world in which mirror-clarity is the order of the day. But in Lane's case the kind of humility Thomas Cole imposes on his viewer in *The Cove, Catskills* or in *Schroon Mountain* is not present. Lane does not overwhelm us with rays of light or blasted figure-trees that signal the existence of an omnipotent God. Nor does he require a huge canvas to state his case. Rather he invites us into a scaled-down world (typically, 10" x 15" for the Brace's Rock series) where hidden brush strokes and carefully modulated tones create a democratic aesthetic in which light is equally distributed and horizontal bands of rock, moving our

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gaze from shore to sea, soften what might otherwise be a distancing vision. To take in *Brace's Rock, Brace's Cove*, what we must do principally is guard against impatience and accept a world in which quietness and limpidity are what storms and the changing seasons were to the Hudson River painters.

That such a delicate, yet confident view of the land should manifest itself in American art at midcentury is alone revealing. But to their credit, the essayists of the *American Light* catalogue, especially editor John Wilmerding, the National Gallery's curator of American art, insist that "if luminism is a definable style, its principles ought to be recognizable in media other than painting." We are not left with an exhibition of American art in which the catalogue ignores cultural and political frameworks. Just the opposite. In *American Light* a luminist aesthetic is seen not only at the center of the photography of Seneca Ray Stoddard and Carleton E. Watkins but, above all, in American writing. Albert Gelpi sees luminist modes of thought emerging from such eighteenth-century theological works as Jonathan Edwards's *Images and Shadows of Divine Things* and continuing in the nineteenth century not only where we would expect to find it—in Emerson's "Nature," Thoreau's *Walden*. Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*—but also in such novels as James Fenimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer*, where Lake Glimmerglass with its "mirrorlike surface" is the center of a scene in which "the whole visible earth from the rounded mountaintop to the water's edge" presents "one unvaried hue of unbroken verdure."

Luminism was a phenomenon, furthermore, going beyond specific writers, painters, photographers. In the end *American Light* shows luminism as the logical expression of an "ocular age" in which seeing was prophecy and the representative American was neither a founding father nor a businessman but democratic man in the open air. In a century such as our own, when the closest we come to a luminist mode of perception is with the industrial landscapes of a Charles Sheeler, it is tempting to sentimentalize such a view of America. We cannot deny how far we have come from a world in which light and "natural" perception promised so much. Nor can we forget the sad fact that by the 1860s, when luminism was flourishing, what made the reassuring celestial melodrama of Frederick Church's *Twilight in the Wilderness* far more appealing to Americans than the cool radiance of luminist art was a bloody Civil War that would change American taste in all the arts and make luminism seem irrelevant.

Yet in the end it is not an elegiac feeling for luminism that *American Light* leaves us with. It is instead a sense of how this short-lived, often fragile mode of perception evolved and how it remains a reference point we turn to when we wonder if any artist can still work with such profound confidence in his natural surroundings that he is willing to be a lens and to rely on his vision of nature rather than a cultivation of artistic personality.

NICOLAUS MILLS

(Nicolaus Mills will be writing regularly on art for Commonweal.)

Books: EVERYTHING BANISHED BUT LOVE

IN a rare—and rarely frank—interview with his old friend V.S. Pritchett a few years ago, Graham Greene described himself as a "Catholic atheist." Whatever that may mean (and it may mean quite a lot), we will probably not find a better working-out of its implications than *Doctor Fischer of Geneva*, his twenty-third novel.

Doctor Fischer is not only a short novel, but an unsettlingly spare one. I doubt if there is a detail in it, from lines of dialogue to what characters order for lunch, that does not contribute to the book's onrush to its final, and grim, moral point. And that point is articulated at the opening of the last, short chapter: "The fact that I have written this narrative tells well enough that, unlike Doctor Fischer, I never found the courage necessary to kill myself."

DOCTOR FISCHER OF GENEVA OR THE BOMB PARTY

Graham Greene

Simon and Schuster, $9.95, 156 pp.

Frank McConnell

The speaker of those words, the book's narrator, is Alfred Jones (Greene delights in finding the most deliberately boring names for the heroes of his parables). Jones, a middle-aged Englishman with a minor secretarial job in a Swiss chocolate firm, meets, falls in love with, and marries Anna-Luise Fischer, the very young daughter of the famous Doctor Fischer, who has become a millionaire many times over through his invention of "Dentophil Bouquet," the best-selling toothpaste in Europe. Fischer lives in a towering, bitter despair. His wife, Anna-Luise's mother, had "betrayed" him years ago by indulging her taste for music (Fischer is unmusical) with a minor clerk name Steiner. Very like Browning's duke in "My Last Duchess," Fischer had the clerk dismissed and then proceeded to murder his wife by repression.

Not satisfied with this revenge, though, Fischer has become famous for his dinner parties—laboratory experiments, actually, in the depths of human greed and self-degradation. Rightly perceiving that the rich are not less, but more pathetically avaricious than the poor, he invites to his dinners a collection of five wealthy grotesques whom Anna-Luise calls the "Toads." There he humiliates them in various absurd, childish ways, which they gladly tolerate for the sake of

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the expensive "presents" they know he will give them at the end of the ordeal. At the first party Jones is invited to attend, for example, the guests are forced to eat cold porridge. Jones refuses, but the Toads dive in enthusiastically, convincing each other that it is only a manifestation of Fischer's wonderful "sense of humor."

C. S. Lewis observed in *Perelandra* that truly Satanic evil is not romantic, black-caped, and thrillingly dark, but rather moronically, cruelly mindless and petty. And there is certainly a strong admixture of this kind of diabolism in the mysterious Doctor Fischer. But there is something else. His "experiments," godlike in their moral autonomy, are like the tests of a vengeful Jehovah eager to see, not who might be saved, but whom he can damn. At least since *Brighton Rock* Greene, good Gnostic that he is, has insisted that blasphemy and despair are at least second best to love and hope. It is the Laodiceans, from Ida Arnold to the Toads, who are really lost.

Greene, even ten years ago, might have been content to let things rest there, with Fischer an ambiguous symbol of our own ambiguous, troubled relationship to the moral order. (Indeed, he does exactly that with the figure of the millionaire "Grand Old Man" of *Loser Takes All*, the book closest to the parabolic economy of this one.) But now he takes us farther. Anna-Luise dies—absurdly, the way people usually die in Greene and the way they usually die in reality—and Jones, after a bungled suicide attempt, agrees reluctantly to attend Doctor Fischer's last party. There the Toads are invited to open Christmas crackers, four of which contain checks for two million francs, and one of which we are told, contains a lethal charge of gunpowder. The party, in other words, is a kind of communal Russian roulette—a game to which Greene himself was addicted, he tells us, in his unhappy youth.

It would be unfair to reveal the details of what happens in that last party. Here as so often, Greene writes a kind of inverted detective story, in which the only thing we are really sure of *is* the final scene. It is enough to say that Jones learns, sadly, that he cannot commit suicide, and Doctor Fischer learns, with ferocious triumph, that now he can. And looking at the dead body of Fischer, Jones thinks, "this . . . was the bit of rubbish I had once compared in my mind with Jehovah and Satan."

For the Catholic atheist, the heart of the world's mystery is that there *is* no mystery, and all parables point to the terrifying, difficult fact that we are counseled (never mind by whom) to love and to survive, despite the difficulty and even the agony of those two activities. The satanic and the blasphemous, however appealing in their Promethean grandeur, are finally *not enough* to make us human: and it is only in being human that we are saved, if at all. Jones is a failure (Greene has always been obsessed with failure) and, in surviving his wife, a betrayer (Greene has always been obsessed with betrayal). But *because* he is those things he is also the storyteller of *Doctor Fischer of Geneva*, and his bitter voice is like a reluctant blessing on our common burden of charity.

To compare great things with great, Greene's last three novels—*The Honorary Consul, The Human Factor,* and *Doctor Fischer of Geneva*—can remind us of Kafka's major, unfinished books, *The Trial* and *The Castle*. Just as Kafka banishes all virtues but Hope from his characters' moral repertoire, so Greene banishes all but Love. And in both cases, the odd and fascinating allegories that result are in fact acts of a distinctively modern, existential Faith in the very center of the abyss.

To say this much is to say the by-now predictable, that *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* is another masterwork in what has to be the most astonishing literary career in English since Joseph Conrad's. Greene has achieved the stature where his quotations from and allusions to his own earlier books are a central part of his meaning. And *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* is rife with such allusions and glancing, tantalizing half-references. But if the book's exploration of "Greeneland" (the landscape of the Fall) is familiar, it is also radically innovative, discovering new and more forbidding promontories and crevasses in that landscape than he has mapped before. Greene, who has flirted with suicide his whole life long, has frequently said that writing for him is primarily an alleviation of the great bane of existence, boredom. But he has never, till now, shown us quite how profoundly "boredom," in his sense, is the elementary burden of consciousness itself, or how much the act of writing, for him, is, like charity, the art of moral survival.

It would be reductive, even silly, to call this a "great" book. It is simply the latest installment in this painfully honest man's fifty-year dialogue with his demons. And, since his demons are so largely ours also, and since he *is* more honest than most of us let ourselves be, his book is not "great," but in a deep sense, essential.

Religion as denial of history

RELIGION ON TRIAL: MIRCEA ELIADE & HIS CRITICS

Guilford Dudley III

Temple University Press, $12.50, 192 pp.

Charles Davis

IN 1963 THOMAS ALTIZER in *Mircea Eliade and the Dialectic of the Sacred* tried to convince us of the theological importance of Eliade. His book's association with the death-of-God theme deprived it of independent attention, so that its portrait of Eliade as a religious thinker with a prophetic vision was not taken up. In departments of religion Eliade's work stayed innocuously classified under the science of religion, with his self-presentation as an interpreter simply describing the data still taken at its face value. How far was the liking for Eliade—probably the most frequently listed author for courses in religion—and the uncritical reception of his theories due to the theological background of so many of the faculty in departments of religion? There was a comforting theological flavor to his writings, missing in the anthropologists—and also in

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the sociologists until Peter Berger came along.

Strange to think that at the very time when in departments of theology biblicists and theologians were stressing sacred history and seeing Judaism and Christianity as uniquely historical religions, students in departments of religion were being made to read in Eliade that religion was the way one escaped the "terror of history," that the denial of history was the very meaning of religious symbols, myths and rites, that the attempt to find salvation through history was utterly mistaken, that even Judaism and Christianity in their true essence were anti-historical.

A powerful challenge, but seemingly without effect. Students took what Eliade was saying about the "archaic ontology" as an objective interpretation of traditional religion. They failed to perceive his polemical advocacy of it as opposed to modern consciousness, his preaching of it as a source of rebirth for the otherwise doomed West. Why did religionists not hear the thundering of this prophet in their midst? Because they drew their identity as a species distinct from theologians from the wishful conviction that theirs was a detached, scientific study of religion, not muddied by any particular religious commitment. Eliade's books were crammed with "facts," conveniently arranged under helpful generalizations about the sacred and its various manifestations. The books were too useful to be overlooked by ex-theologians finding their sea-legs in comparative religion. At the same time, the strength of their newly formed identity blocked off the perception that one was dealing here with a system as a priori as any overt theology, with a guiding religious vision more powerful than most theologians could muster.

The illusion that Eliade read his conclusions off the data was shattered by the anthropologists. Some critical reviews were followed by an all-out attack by Edmund Leach, reinforced by Anthony Wallace. A general report is given by John Saliba in *'Homo Religiosus' in Mircea Eliade: An Anthropological Evaluation*. The charge is not only that Eliade works from a priori assumptions, but also that his use of evidence is slip-

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shod and prejudiced. He does not distinguish primary and secondary sources, nor does he evaluate them, often making use of discredited sources. His famous range of empirical data is gained, so it is said, by "scrabbling through indices" for usable references.

Religionists have remained more polite, but some, like Baird and Penner, have now examined Eliade's methodology and found it wanting.

In the book under review Dudley sets himself up as mediator. He earns his right to the role by giving an excellent account of Eliade's vision of *homo religiosus*. He admits its normative character as an ontology and soteriology. Eliade's theories are not based on inductive reasoning from the data. They are not empirically verifiable or falsifiable, because his intuitive method is not that of the empiricists. But while admitting that, Dudley is not willing to surrender the scientific claims and explanatory power of Eliade's theories. Referring to present new thinking about scientific method—Kuhn, Lakatos *et alii*—Dudley suggests that historians of religion are out of date in insisting on the old-fashioned data-hypothesis-verification model for scientific research. What science calls for today is bold, imaginative theories, having the heuristic power to generate new "facts" unnoticed before and new explanations for old previously unexplained facts. So, while they might reject Eliade's misleading presentation of his own work and method and clean up some secondary inaccuracies, religionists should not dismiss it, but instead revise it and exploit its great heuristic value. As a more precise suggestion, Dudley argues that Eliade's theoretical work is best presented as belonging to the French tradition of deductive systemic thought or synchronic analysis, as represented by Lévi-Strauss, Dumézil, Foucault among others.

Eliade wants to show that Nietzsche, Spengler, Toynbee, Eliot and Joyce have all given expression to what Western man feels but cannot bring himself to admit: that the so-called ontology of history fails to satisfy basic human soteriological needs. As homo religiosus, *Western man—no less than Eastern and primitive man—needs the archaic ontology to save himself from the "terror of history." Eliade argues that Christianity in its essence is antihistorical: "Christianity entered into history in order to abolish it." The positive thrust of Christianity, he argues, is to escape history and return to paradise.*

—Guilford Dudley III,
Religion on Trial:
Mircea Eliade & His Critics

The case has its points, but I remain unconvinced. A religious vision, polemically advocated with prophetic fervor as a source of salvation is a different beast, even when heuristically caged, from a scientific paradigm. It is worth noting that Edmund Leach, the outstanding advocate in English of Lévi-Strauss and French synchronic analysis, cannot abide Eliade one little bit.

Experiment without experience

ADVICE TO A YOUNG SCIENTIST

Peter B. Medawar

Harper & Row, $10., 155 pp.

Marc Lappé

NOTHING is so anathema to the scientific mind as self-reflection. The truly creative scientist relies more on the direction suggested by each experimental observation than by some deeper understanding of the motivations and techniques of discovery that underly the scientific method. Many of the truly eminent scientists, I suspect, would rather leave it to the historians of science to decipher the tomes of laboratory notebooks that are the hallmark of an inventive mind; or let the philosophers of science interpret the composite impact of cultural forces and psychohistory on their particular brand of epistemology and discovery.

It is no accident that great inventors, from Leonardo da Vinci to Thomas Alva Edison left their notebooks to posterity to interpret (Edison's alone comprise some six million entries). Inventories scientific or musical are the evolutionary endpoint of often thousands of selective cognitive and inductive decisions, and one suspects, self-reflection is anathema to their success. One does not uncover the Zeitgeist of a particularly creative period, say in music, by asking a Rubinstein to write a treatise on piano method.

Rather than formula, creativity often requires the chance coming together of life events and scientific observation. One needs only to think of the Prince of Serendip, or the snake-eating-its-own-tail dreams of Kukélé—so instrumental in his uncovery of the structure of benzene, to appreciate the constant interplay of mind, matter and cultural milieu in setting the scientific process in train. (It is more than coincidental that the French word for an experiment is *expérience*.)

Thus, it comes as some surprise that the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation should believe it possible to derive the essence of the scientific life from reflections of still extant, notable members of the scientific community. Two books in this series have now been published: Freeman Dyson's *Disturbing the Universe*; and Peter Brian Medawar's *Advice to a Young Scientist*. For two authors given the same task—namely, to distill from their lives those thoughts and experiences which best convey the nature of scientific inquiry—the books differ dramatically in style and approach. Dyson's treatment is more truly autobiographical, a vision that drifts in three stages across the landscape of his life. Dyson's writing is at one and the same time richly anecdotal and visionary; he conveys the verve, enthusiasm and troubling aspects of the scientific process by indirection, yet, with powerful cogency.

P. B. Medawar's efforts are drier and more directly pointed to the assigned task. *Advice to a Young Scientist*, as the title implies, takes the Sloan Foundation's charge literally. Partly as a result of this earnest undertaking, the book's tone is almost arch (*Advice* is dedicated

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to the Royal Society of London), and unless one appreciates the nobility of Medawar's stature and his particularly Oxfordian grace, an American reader could well be put off by a distant, almost Victorian style in his writing.

Yet, I find I am closer to Medawar's science than to Dyson's since I cut my scientific eye-teeth on Medawar's classic treatments on transplantation immunology. I learned the Medawar and Billingham technique of skin grafting—and the particular dogma that called for the sole participation of lymphocytes in graft rejection—from a disciple, once removed from Medawar's own tutelage. In fact, I have found the impact of Medawar's published work a more tangible influence on my appreciation of science than I have found his treatment of science in *Advice*.

One problem in generalizing from practice and experiential knowledge to the abstract is oversimplification. Medawar provides explanations of the scientific method that are often either too simplistic or too rarefied. Thus, he refers to science as the potentiation of common sense; or elsewhere, as a vehicle for verifying the Kantian view of a priori knowledge.

In contrast to Dyson, who believes the scientific process itself is best depicted through personal experience, Medawar often stays at a level of generalization that is ill-suited to conveying the "feel" of true science. Unfortunately, he provides only the sparsest of anecdotes and personal experiences to exemplify the type of phenomenon that makes for truly creative science. At other times, he succeeds. Thus, he is particularly eloquent and convincing when he describes the strange kind of synergism of the creative process that can accompany a collaborative effort. Medawar provides a striking paragraph in his treatment of moral dilemmas in the framing of a scientific question. It is critical, in Medawar's mind, for scientists to grapple with the potential moral consequences of their work before undertaking it. Sadly, this is the single exposure to the issues of social responsibility that intrigue many students of science. Beyond the injunction for full disclosure, the content of the necessary moral analysis of this issue is left vague. (To be sure, simply raising the issue is mark enough of a social conscience all too rare among scientists of Medawar's stature.)

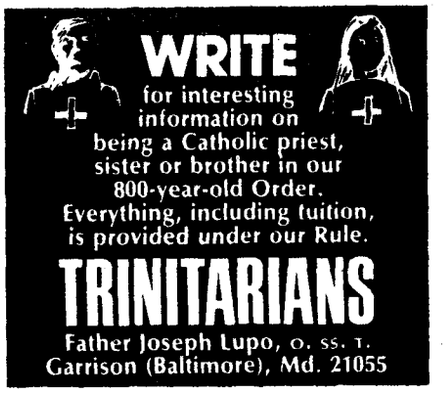
> *Scientific collaboration is not like cooks elbowing each other from the pot of broth; nor is it like artists working on the same canvas, or engineers working out how to start a tunnel simultaneously from both sides of a mountain in such a way that the contractors do not miss each other in the middle and emerge independently at opposite ends.*
>
> *It is, in the planning stage, anyway, more like a session of gag writers, for although each one knows, as all scientists know, that having an idea—a brainwave—can be only a personal event, each also knows that an atmosphere can be created in which one member of the team sparks off the others so that they all build upon and develop each other's ideas. In the outcome, nobody is quite sure who thought of what. The main thing is that something was thought of.* —Peter B. Medawar
> *Advice to a Young Scientist*

Medawar is more consistent if he is read within the ethos of classical science. He insists on total objectivity and detachment for the proper conduct of science. He offers as his penultimate bit of "Advice" the injunction to cultivate total detachment from the conviction that a particular hypothesis is true. Such detachment is of course part of the central dogma that Thomas Kuhn, in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* cites as necessary for "normal science." But, insisting on detachment denies the human penchant for problem-solving and is manifestly unfair to the passion that characterizes virtually every creative scientist I have known. It is not enough to simply implore or insist on objectivity. Powerful biasing factors will always exist in science. It is the scientists' obligation only to create the conditions that will best impede the influence of expectations of outcome of experiments, not in their design.

To test an idea that conflicts with the orthodoxy, or to seek out a novel or common explanation for a welter of conflicting data is, as Kuhn points out, the stuff of scientific revolutions. This type of science demands passion, verve, commitment and above all, immense self-confidence. Only at the critical juncture of conducting the test itself can the scientist divorce himself from the outcome. It is for this reason that the "double-blind" approach to animal and human testing, where neither the experimenter nor his aides, (or in the case of people, the subject himself) knows the experimental design, is so essential to the proper conduct of science.

But, what of that first group experiments, those that have the "moral content" to which Medawar so briefly alluded? Is it enough to create conditions of complete objectivity, or may it sometimes be essential to weigh the political and social factors that may make that test—and its outcome—particularly attractive to one or another vested interest group in society or impose harms on another, before doing the work? And here I am thinking about tests to assign genetic explanations for socioeconomic differences in nutritional status, blood pressure, or intelligence. It might well be that it is possible to test the thesis that all of the variance in iron levels in blacks comes from the genes and not the environment. But would heavy investment in this type of research be desirable, without first equalizing nutritional inputs of iron to all populations?

How *does* one decide not to do a particular piece of science? Or resolve a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moral dilemma in research? And it is here that Medawar's work lets the reader down. Instead of investing the scant pagination available to a dissertation on the relative merits of the Baconian, Aristotelian, Galilean and Kantian experimentation, would not the budding young scientist be better off if provided with a discourse on how Medawar himself resolved those conflicts that most threatened the conduct of his own work? How did he get himself in the position of submitting a paper to *Nature* before he had adequately verified the existence of amelanocytic (pigmentless) melanocytes in guinea pig skin? Or why don't we learn about the machinations that led to Medawar's intercession in the egregious case at Sloan Kettering Institute, where a scientist named Summerlin allegedly fabricated the results of his skin-grafting experiments in a manner that brought ignominy to his institution and to science itself?

As a young scientist I would have been intrigued to learn Medawar's views on the moral issues involved in the massive suppression of immunity needed in the earliest days of human kidney transplantation, where very little animal work was adequately translated into the human sector. I would have loved to read Medawar describing his role in the disputations over the original heart transplants in South Africa, or the spurious data published that seemed to refute his thesis about the null role of serum factors in graft rejection, or the use of animal "xenografts" in humans. In sum, I looked for and missed all of those experiential elements that could make a treatise on science for the neophyte intriguing and gripping.

Too often, one feels, Medawar vests too much in classical scientific paradigms. By insisting on deductive processes and critical experiments in lieu of the more wide-ranging uses of induction and intuition that made Darwin's work, to cite but one instance, so spectacular, Medawar clings to orthodoxy and underplays revolution. Still, I am grateful to learn at the feet of the master once again, an opportunity that would have been missed had some science historian, and not the great P. B. Medawar himself, passed on this elution of his reflections on science.

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Greek culture & the god of love

THE LUST TO ANNIHILATE: A Psychoanalytic Study of Violence in Ancient Greek Culture

Eli Sagan

Psychohistory Press, $12, 231 pp.

Jean Bethke Elshtain

ELI SAGAN is a sociologist with impressive achievements in anthropology and psychoanalytic theory. His previous book, *Cannibalism: Human Aggression and Cultural Form*, offered a provocative treatment of a topic most of us prefer not to think about (deny, repress Sagan might say) which, as a result, has been underexamined in anthropological scholarship. In Sagan's hands, an exploration of cannibalism involved incisive reflections on the nexus between individual psychology, human aggression, the emergence of cultural forms, and the process of social transformation.

Although *The Lust to Annihilate* lacks the fluidity, hence some of the readability, of Sagan's earlier work, it retains his commitment to interdisciplinary scholarship from a moral point of view. What most distinguishes Sagan's perspective is not so much that he puts his own values or 'biases' up front, as almost everybody claims to these days, but that his moral commitments are *internal* to the perspective he brings to bear on his material. I hope my distinction is clear. It is not, to repeat, a matter of Sagan saying, with a knowing wink, "Sure, I have my biases. So does everybody else. Let's just put our cards on the table and go about our work." Rather, Sagan insists on analyzing and describing *through* moral terms of discourse. Moral concerns are so thoroughly imbedded in his reflections that in evaluating his arguments one must confront his moral commitments. Clearly, Sagan would have it no other way. He repudiates the dodges, euphemisms, and niceties that enable contemporary academic scholars to evade moral choice, conflict, and debate.

"Ancient Greece." Say the words. Pay attention to the associations that cluster around that powerful image. Athens: birthplace of democracy. Pericles's funeral oration, bravery unexcelled, culture of stunning achievement, heroes, statesmen, architects, sculptors, poets, tragedians, philosophers. Perhaps a few recall slavery, an institution taken-for-granted by most Greeks. There may be some among us who associate the term 'imperialism,' even 'genocide' with Greek antiquity. But these irritants in the image have done little, it seems, to dull the luster of Hellas, to call into question all those lyrical celebrations which reached their apogee in Lord Byron's effusions. "The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece! Where burning Sappho loved and sung, Where grew the arts of war and peace, Where Delos rose and Phoebus sprung! Eternal summer gilds them yet, But all, except their sun, is set."

Sadly, Sagan would insist, Byron's lament is not quite as true as one might hope. A troubling inheritance of the "isles of Greece," with implications for the future of humankind, is the Greek commitment "to sadistic violence, a love of killing. . . ." This "lust to annihilate," though superseded historically in the dramatic moral transformations marking the shift from the pagan to the Christian world-view, stand today not

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only, or simply, as an indictment of a past way of life but as a warning of what human beings may become should they fail to sublimate aggression into non-violent, non-sadistic forms.

Sagan contends that the Greek "love of killing" persisted past Homer and the heroic age and accounts in large part for the ultimate "failure" of Greek culture. Bringing psychoanalysis to bear to illumine the topic of violence and aggression, Sagan approaches culture and history from its psychic end. It is his claim that culture is the collective product of human agency, all those actions of individuals that are always motivated by reasons rather than being random or fortuitous. If a scholar can effectively and lucidly probe the individual psyche of an epoch, through its most important, vital, representative figures and modes of expression, he will be able, first, to plausibly reconstruct individual motivations and, second, to assess why collective human agency took the forms it did and not others. This is a complex argument and a contested position. Sagan is aware of the controversy surrounding his presumptions but he is sometimes a bit casual in making the case for his own approach.

The conceptual wedge Sagan uses to open up the Greek past distinguishes "what is immoral *in a society* from what is morally problematic *for that society*" [emphasis mine] For example: a social institution may be immoral—slavery comes to mind as a paradigmatic case—yet not be morally problematic *for* the culture in which it exists, having been accepted by social participants as the "way things are, always have been, and must be." In seeking out the morally problematic, a scholar must "get inside" the culture to find expressions of "a profound and pervasive ambivalence about an institution. . . ." If these expressions of ambivalence are widespread, the scholar is justified in presuming that he has uncovered a fundamental tension within the society. He is further justified in erecting as one touchstone of his interpretation the way in which the culture in question either failed or succeeded in resolving those problems considered morally problematic.

Sagan builds his case beginning with a meticulous textual exegesis of the *Iliad*. He assays which acts of aggression are considered legitimate, which illegitimate, and how ambivalence about aggression manifests itself inside the Homeric world. Perhaps Sagan could make his case no other way, but the frequent, sometimes lengthy citations from the *Iliad* tend to break up the continuity of the text in the early chapters. The reader is occasionally overwhelmed by all the proof of Sagan's thesis. But one must appreciate his dilemma. He would demolish a widespread and cherished mythic view of the past. Over-argument may be unavoidable; certainly it is understandable.

Although Sagan makes imaginative use of Freudian concepts and themes throughout the text, his placement of the Oedipus complex at the center of his theoretical reflections is problematic in one sense. The problem emerges with those alterations Sagan proposes in the description of the Oedipal dynamic. Although his changes serve him well as he probes the failure of the Greeks to work through Oedipal aggression, my caveat is one which vexes every scholar who embraces psychoanalysis as a powerful explanatory tool. Simply put: can one alter the core categories of a theory grounded in clinical evidence without providing clinical verification for one's proposed changes? I shall not answer this daunting question but note it as important and unexplored by Sagan.

Following his dissection of the genuine horror in the Homeric vision, Sagan turns to Greek tragedy as the most noble, sustained attempt to transcend the Homeric vision. For all the pity and terror evoked by the tragic playwrights, Sagan concludes (again amassing textual evidence) that no Greek tragedian was able "to give us one consistent, believable play that ends with a true reconciliation. This want of success is at one with the failure of Greek culture to develop the conception of a god of love who is capable of forgiving us our sins." That failure, later highlighted in the "might makes right" ideology of Thucydides's

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history, meant the reaffirmation of the view that "the power to dominate and kill men is the greatest proof of manliness . . . that man can achieve no greater goal than to die gloriously in battle and be honored by his fellow-killers when he is dead." On this question, Sagan is scathing. The moral transformation of Western humanity was postponed until the fourth century A.D. when a "god of love" provided "what had been sorely lacking in pagan culture; the barbarism of the Roman arena was extirpated, the revolutionary doctrine that even slaves possess a soul and are loved by God was proclaimed."

That the Hebrew-Christian ideal has never been fully achieved should not lead, urges Sagan, to its cynical dismissal. Cultural transformation, the real alteration in the moral instincts of the human species, is a process that requires thousands of years. Ideals serve as the catalyst to such change over time. A culture which "cannot conceive of love as an ideal of human behavior, as Greek culture could not" is a society which cannot evolve the social forms to incorporate that ideal. We cannot implement what we have not conceived.

This is a bold book. Those readers who think Sagan "protests too much" are invited to turn to the *Iliad*, this time with eyes wide-awake to the fearful, sadistic blood lust there celebrated. Sagan would call a halt to notions of heroism that require the destruction, maiming, exploitation, and oppression of others. Those who question his arguments, and the conclusions drawn from his moral premises, have the responsibility to ask themselves: What, then, are my moral commitments? Am I willing to accept the Greek lust to annihilate as legitimate 'for them' but not 'for us'? Does this make my stance one of ethical relativism? If so, how would I defend the moral ground on which I stand before others in the present and the future?

REVIEWERS

FRANK McCONNELL, author of *Storytelling and Mythmaking: Images from Film and Literature* (Oxford), is presently working on a study of the fiction of Graham Greene.

CHARLES DAVIS is chairman of the religion department at Concordia University, Montreal. His latest book is *Body as Spirit*.

MARC LAPPE is acting director of Hazard Alert systems (HALT), department of health services in Berkeley, California.

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN is associate professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

DENNIS VELLUCCI teaches English at Archbishop Molloy High School in Queens.

In Brief

DOROTHEA LANGE: *A Photographer's Life, by Milton Meltzer, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $15, 399 pp.*

There is a generation of Americans whose images of the Great Depression come from two sources: stories their parents told them and the photographs taken in the thirties by Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans and Margaret Bourke-White—familiar photographs like Lange's "Migrant Mother" and "White Angel Bread Line" that in a brief time have made such an impression on the national consciousness that it is hard for those of us who did not live through the Depression to visualize it in any other way.

Milton Meltzer's biography of Dorothea Lange is exhaustive, particularly in its coverage of the Depression years. It is well-researched and scholarly, but like much biography, it is written in admiration and is therefore occasionally too reverent, neither critical enough in its disposition nor selective enough in biographical detail. *Dorothea Lange: A Photographer's Life* is most successful when Meltzer uses Lange's career to explore the aesthetics of photography, the evolution of photography from craft to art, and the use of the camera as an instrument of social change.

Thouh Jacob Riis had used photographs to document social conditions late in the nineteenth century, it was in the 1930s with the popularity of Henry Luce's *Life* Magazine and the Life and Circumstances feature in *Fortune* that photographers became self-conscious about their art and aware of the social changes they might effect through it. Lange's most fundamental aesthetic was simplicity; unlike the camera of Margaret Bourke-White, Lange's favored no dramatic lighting or bizarre angles to evoke sympathy. Speaking of her photographs of migrant workers, Lange said: "I had to get my camera to register things about them that were more important than how poor they were—their pride, their strength, their spirit." Like Walker Evans, Lange acknowledged the dignity her subjects retained whatever their hardships by virtue of their humanity. Yet, Lange seems to have lacked the intensity and spirituality that made Walker Evans such a suitable partner for James Agee. No less compassionate, Lange was more practical. Meltzer writes that while she "saw the immediate in terms of its broader human significance," Lange's intention was "to photograph the now rather than the timeless"—in short, to produce results. And to this end she succeeded: when her husband, Paul Taylor, illustrated his report with her photographs at a meeting of the California Rural Rehabilitation Committee, money was approved for the construction of decent government-run camps for migrant families.

After the Depression, Lange became involved on behalf of Japanese-Americans detained in camps during the war, and, later still, worked on a series of "Ballet" photographs which sought "to capture the beauty of everyday actions." Lange's photographs were prominently featured in Edward Steichen's celebrated 1955 exhibit, "The Family of Man"—the exhibit that moved Aline Saarinen, art critic for *The New York Times*, to wonder whether "photography had replaced painting as the greatest visual art of our time." If, indeed, it had, Meltzer is right to attribute its preeminence to the professionalism and dedication of Dorothea Lange.

Correspondence

(Continued from page 354)

priest to sound like that, he would have (a) put him in the pews, whence the Great Amen is supposed to emanate or (b) inspired him to the pursuit of Thespianism,

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not of whatever it is priests are supposed to pursue. The best bet for many lay people, David O'Rourke, is to find big, half-filled churches where they can seat themselves not too near the altar and have room besides to relax and soak in whatever of the transcendental is suggested by Gothic interiors. The halfway decent preacher-liturgist will not be so loud or intrusive that the lay person cannot have some good musings while he's at it. And a good musing is hard to find.

JAMES H. BOWMAN

Preaching the Gospel

Long Beach, Calif.

To the Editors: There is much of value in David O'Rourke's article on liturgy, not the least of which is a little praise for the intellectuals in the church. However, he comes dangerously close to personifying the misconceptions of the word "intellectual" which he attempts to avoid. He misconstrues a few elements in the new liturgy and capitalizing on weakness, overconcludes his evidence.

To begin with granting his suspect thesis that "all liturgy, past and present, is a social process . . .", Father O'Rourke appears to blur the distinction between liturgy and devotion. They differ precisely in that liturgy is a social event. The increased social character of the new liturgy is an indication of its faithfulness as a "public gathering." To be sure, there is a need for dialogue with self, and personal dialogue to support personal amd communal prayer. But the liturgy, by definition, must be a dialogue among the community, and a community dialogue with God. I cannot envision a very good liturgy in which each member of the congregation is engaging in a personal trance.

It is not just the intellectuals, but all Catholics, who need "to find the church's worship, as a whole, meaningful." If the intellectuals (and I am not sure they would all claim David O'Rourke as their spokesman) are unable to find this, I suggest that it is not because the individual priest has become a showman, but rather the majority of priests put no effort into their role as leader of the liturgy. They are ecclesiastical automatons: the church's answer to R2 D2 without the personality.

No doubt there are, and always will be, a few priests who pray as dramatically as TV evangelist Bob Schuller smiles. They stand out not so much due to their drama as the ineffective style of the vast majority of other priests. Consider those priests who "say" Mass just as they did before only now they speak English and technically "face" the people. Or consider those priests who misguidedly boast "I have never been distracted at Mass." Of course, they look at the altar, floor or ceiling while saying "The Lord be with you."

It is one of those ironic twists that the problem with the uninspiring priest is the same for the dramatic one. It is also the same for Bob Schuller. It is the inability or refusal to preach the Gospel—a Gospel that involves suffering as well as glory, death as well as Resurrection; a Gospel which is social and communal. I submit that it is this refusal to preach the Gospel that is "common American overlay." It is evident in the homilies from the bishops to the deacons. This refusal has rendered ineffective witness in our own society and the inability to speak to foreign societies. In the absence of the Gospel, the liturgy must become either a show or a private communiqué. Assuming the Gospel will not begin to be preached overnight, I opt for the priest who rides down the center aisle on a bicycle dressed as a clown, over the priest who mumbles (or shouts) ancient, irrelevant platitudes.

(REV.) WILLIAM MESSENGER

Thanks for art's sake

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: I am writing to tell you how pleased I was to find that your April 25, 1980 issue featured an art review.

As an avid follower of the art scene, I look forward to reading art criticism of such high quality in your future issues. Ms. Mullarkey's writing was both stimulating and informative.

Thank you for a welcome addition to your magazine.

SUSAN RODINES

Correction: In Ms. Mullarkey's April 25 review, Miriam Schapiro's name was misspelled and the artwork pictured was "Golden Fan," not "Barcelona Fan." Our apologies. THE EDITORS

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